

# Sharing the Light

## **To the priests and people of the Archdiocese of Detroit:**

It is with a measure of relief that I share with you the good news that the Knights of Columbus has signed a purchase agreement to acquire the building and land at 3900 Harewood Road in Washington D.C., which is where the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center is located.

The Knights will establish a shrine to Blessed John Paul II at the Center, including exhibits on his life, legacy, and the Catholic heritage of North America. I am most grateful to the Knights for stepping forward to make this transaction a reality. And, I applaud their intent to strengthen the vision of the Center and continue the intended purpose for the building and land.

The sale should be finalized within the next sixty days and will involve the Cultural Center Foundation, the Catholic University of America (CUA), and the Archdiocese of Detroit. The Knights will pay \$22.7 million to the Foundation for the building and land, of which \$2.7 million will go to CUA, which has a secured interest on the land. After closing costs, the Archdiocese of Detroit will receive approximately \$20 million from the Foundation for the sale.

While this amount is notably less than the \$54 million in loans the Archdiocese invested in the Cultural Center's design, construction, and maintenance, the sale will enable us to recoup some of what we invested and will end archdiocesan outlays averaging \$65,000 per month to maintain the building and grounds. The \$20 million in cash we receive will help stabilize Archdiocesan finances.

For the past 18 months the Archdiocese marketed the Cultural Center building and land for sale. All of the offers we received were clustered in the \$20 million range; the Knights presented the best offer and terms of sale. The building was designed and constructed at the peak of the pre-9/11 financial and real estate markets, which have changed dramatically. Archdiocesan decisions to invest in the Cultural Center were made in a vastly different environment, at a time when resources were readily available and the economy was strong. With the unanimous support of the Archdiocesan Finance Council and the College of Consultors, I decided to move forward in light of the present market value of the property rather than wait for the economy to recover and continue to incur the monthly expenses of \$65,000 to maintain the building and grounds.

Please join me in prayerful thanks for this outcome as well as for the future efforts by the Knights of Columbus on establishing a shrine to Blessed John Paul II in our nation's capital.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

The Most Reverend Allen H. Vigneron  
Archbishop of Detroit

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*Posted: Aug. 2, 2011*