



Office of the Archbishop

Archdiocese of San Antonio

P.O. Box 28410 • San Antonio, Texas 78228-0410
Phone (210) 734-2620
Fax (210) 734-0708

March 31, 2009

Most Reverend John M. D' Arcy
Bishop of the Diocese of Fort Wayne- South Bend
Post Office Box 390
Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801

Dear Bishop D' Arcy,

We are saddened by the circumstances that made you decide not to attend this year's commencement ceremonies at the University of Notre Dame, and are writing in total support of your action and its motives. The unfortunate message sent to the nation by the university's invitation to President Barack Obama to speak at their graduation ceremony is compounded by their decision to provide him an honorary law degree.

We understand and agree with the need to hold the office of President of the United States in high regard and with due respect. However, this action is in direct opposition to the statement published by the U.S. Bishops, "*Faithful Citizenship: Civic Responsibility for a New Millennium.*" That document clearly states the responsibility of a Catholic institution to "...not honor those who act in defiance of our fundamental moral principles. They should not be given awards, honors or platforms which would suggest support for their actions."

President Obama has made it clear that his policies on abortion and the general protection of innocent life are in dramatic opposition to the teachings of the Catholic Church. At this critical time we cannot afford to send an ambiguous message to our leaders or our people.

We're sorry that the Administration of the University did not inform you in advance of their intention to invite President Obama. It is our firm conviction that Catholic Universities must work in unity with the local Bishop for the good of the people of God and the Universal Church. We're sure you recall the words of the Holy Father as he addressed American Catholic educators, that Catholic identity "is a question of conviction."

We join you in prayer for President Barack Obama. It is our hope that he will enter into an honest dialogue with Church leaders that will lead him to reconsider his positions on the critical issues in defense of human life at every stage.

Fraternally yours in Christ,

+ José H. Gomez

Most Reverend José H. Gomez, S.T.D.
Archbishop of San Antonio

+ Oscar Cantú

Most Reverend Oscar Cantú, D.D.
Auxiliary Bishop of San Antonio