



**OFFICE OF THE BISHOP  
THE DIOCESE OF TOLEDO**

1933 SPIELBUSCH AVENUE  
TOLEDO, OHIO 43604-5360

October 31, 2009

Dear Friends in Christ,

Back in June I asked all parishes to alert you, the Catholic people of our diocese, about the threat of severe cuts not only to social programs but also to our Catholic schools in the Ohio State Budget.

I am grateful to everyone who took the time and made the effort to contact their legislators. The Ohio Catholic Conference in Columbus tells me that the response from our diocese was very good.

Although some positive changes were made before the budget was finally approved, deep cuts were made to programs in mental health and protective services. Also, very disappointingly, there was a cut of \$59 million over the next two years, as proposed by the Governor, in assistance to students attending Catholic and other chartered nonpublic schools.

As a result of these cuts, a Catholic school of 350 students is now receiving, on average, \$43,500 less in state-funded assistance in 2009/2010; a high school of 800 students is receiving, on average, \$99,000 less in 2009/2010.

In the past our schools have received equal treatment relative to the benefits received, but not this time. While Catholic schools are subject to a 15% cut, public schools in Ohio will experience a cut of only a quarter of one percent and have also received federal stimulus money. The budget, as passed, suggests that Catholic taxpayers, parents and the children we serve will continue to be the last to receive any consideration and the first to be cut.

Through the Catholic Conference of Ohio, the Bishops are working to overturn or mitigate the severe budget cuts to Catholic schools. Ultimately, however, our success depends on the voice of Catholic voters.

The State legislature is currently reconsidering budget revenues. Two bills, HB 268 (Driehaus-D) and SB 177 (Seitz-R & Cates-R), propose restoring funds to students in our schools. Our message, irrespective of the funding mechanisms in these two bills, is this: "Find common ground for restoring funding to Catholic school students."

**I ask that you do all that you can by letter, phone or e-mail to let your state legislators and the Governor know your desire to see our funds restored. The contact information you need is printed in your parish bulletin and is available on our diocesan website [toledodiocese.org](http://toledodiocese.org).**

Catholic schools continue to make a tremendous contribution to our State. This year our diocese alone is educating over 21,000 students. However, this represents a 6% drop in the number of students from last year. Hard economic times and fewer children are taking their toll, and I will have more to say about this challenge after the New Year.

Thank you for your efforts, and God bless you.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*+ Leonard P. Blair*

Most Reverend Leonard P. Blair  
Bishop of Toledo