

TO: Media Outlets

FROM: Most Reverend Donald W. Trautman, STD, SSL, Bishop of Erie

RE: Notre Dame University's Invitation to President Obama

DATE: May 12, 2009

ERIE, Pa. – The Golden Dome of Notre Dame, the long revered symbol of a Catholic university, will be disgraced and dishonored on this coming May 17th, the commencement day of the university. On that day the leaders of the university are giving a platform and honorary degree to an individual who is a relentless advocate of unrestricted abortion: President Obama. On his fourth day in the White House he approved federal funding to perform private abortions in other countries (the overturning of the Mexico City Policy). He restored to the United Nations Population Fund monies to support abortions, while opposing federal funding for pro-life pregnancy help centers. He authorized funding to conduct human embryonic stem cell research.

In the words of Mary Ann Glendon, professor of law at Harvard University who turned down the prestigious Laetare Medal from Notre Dame University, President Obama is “an uncompromising opponent of the Church’s position on issues involving fundamental principles of justice.” May 17th will mark not just a bad decision by university officials, it will mark a day of shame and blemish for the Catholic record and reputation of Notre Dame University. Its relationship to the Catholic hierarchy and to the fundamental principles of the Church has been fractured and will take new leadership to rebuild.

Many loyal alumni, students, and faculty will continually pray the rosary in reparation at the Notre Dame Grotto during the graduation. They will give witness of what the real Notre Dame is all about. What should be a day of joyous celebration for graduates and their families will be a day of shame and dilemma as the university leadership moves away from its rich Catholic tradition.

Now must begin the work of bringing new luster to the Golden Dome. Now is the time for recommitment to being once again a great Catholic university.

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