



ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK

Chancery Office
JOHN P. CAHILL
Chancellor

August 31, 2020

Honorable Corey Johnson
Speaker, New York City Council
224 West 30th Street, Suite 1206
New York, New York 10001

Honorable Margaret Chin
New York City Council
101 Lafayette Street, 9th Floor
New York, New York 10013

Honorable Gale Brewer
Manhattan Borough President
1 Centre Street, 19th Floor
New York, New York 10007

Honorable Brad Hoylman
New York State Senate
322 Eighth Avenue, Suite 1700
New York, New York 10001

Honorable Jerrold Nadler
United States Representative
201 Varick Street, Suite 669
New York, New York 10014

Honorable Deborah Glick
New York State Assembly
853 Broadway, Suite 2007
New York, New York 10003

Honorable Carlina Rivera
New York City Council
254 East 4th Street
New York, New York 10009

Dear Speaker Johnson, Borough President Brewer, Congressman Nadler, Councilmember Rivera, Councilmember Chin, State Senator Hoylman, and Assemblymember Glick:

Thank you for your August 21st letter. I hope that the following response is helpful.

As you know the decision not to reopen several of our schools was a painful one, predicated on a drastic reduction in student enrollments and rapidly increasing financial deficits. We are not willing, or able, at this time to reconsider these closings. During our July 29th meeting with you, we outlined the situation we faced, focusing on the lack of governmental support we receive that would assist our schools. We do not have unlimited resources, and the pandemic has had a devastating financial impact on our programs and operations. The parents of the closed schools have been engaged and unfortunately, significant fundraising does not close the financial gap by a long shot. Despite these challenges, we are committed to ensuring that every child who attended a school that is not reopening will have a guaranteed seat at one of our nearby Catholic schools. All this was stated during our July meeting.

In the case of Our Lady of Pompeii, the September enrollment for the entire school had fallen to 83 students and the annual operating deficit had exceeded \$1,000,000. Our decision to close schools is always a reluctant one but does not diminish our commitment to provide families with a Catholic education for their children if they so choose.

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Our schools, despite their fragile financial situation are known for their excellence, and we appreciate your acknowledgement of that. Although there are fundamental differences in the mission of Catholic schools, we hope that Catholic schools will be included whenever future decisions are made on the local, state and federal governmental levels in support of local educational initiatives and funding. Government plays an essential role in safeguarding all schools and their students. Catholic schools should not be omitted from this process.

When our schools are forced to close we have almost always contacted the New York City Department of Education ("DOE") and the School Construction Authority ("SCA") to determine if the property can be of use to them. We indicated this during the July 29th meeting and our commitment to work with these two agencies continues.

In your letter, you requested that we share with you a list of all vacant properties owned by the Archdiocese of New York. We always will seek to use our vacant properties in the most prudent manner consistent with our mission, be it for the development of affordable housing, parish use, and in certain cases when needed, sale to private entities to allow us to finance renovations to landmarked churches, compliance with burdensome unfunded mandates, or for programs to assist the disabled, the elderly and the hungry. We will continue to do so, and will appropriately involve those concerned.

We have worked with you in the past, and look forward to doing so in the future as we move ahead past this current crisis that has so severely tested our country and city.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John P. Cahill".

John P. Cahill
Chancellor
Archdiocese of New York

cc: Joseph Rosenberg