



DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER
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March 8, 2009

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I send you my warmest greetings and hopes that you are feeling the full and magnificent power of Christ Jesus in your lives during this Lenten season. I write in this extraordinary way to make you aware of a special opportunity presented by a very generous benefactor to help the poor children of Rochester's inner city – and to ask you for your help.

Continuing their tradition of helping our community, the Wegman Family Charitable Foundation has offered to provide up to \$2 million in scholarships for poor children if the Diocese can raise \$500,000 in new donations to this cause. So far, generous donors have provided more than \$300,000 toward this \$500,000 goal, but we need many more people to donate if we are to be successful for these children.

I need not tell you of the obstacles children of low-income families face, from dire poverty in their homes to daily violence on their streets. Parents of these children tell us that they truly believe the faith-based education they are receiving in our safe and nurturing Catholic schools is a strong deterrent to the enticement of youth gangs, violence and drugs. Our own experience is that these children perform exceedingly well with the vast majority going on to college. This is a remarkable success story that we must celebrate and continue.

I know you have already been generous to the Catholic Ministries Appeal. But I ask you again for support in this special effort for the sake of these children and their future.

In this time of almsgiving, in this time in which we celebrate our own blessings and the abundant love and forgiveness of Almighty God, let us give hope to these children; let us stretch out our hands and offer them a way up and out of poverty through education.

Thank you. God will bless you for your generosity. With every good wish, I remain,

Your brother in Christ,

† Matthew H. Clark Bishop of Rochester