

April 3, 2009

Reverend John I. Jenkins, C.S.C.
President
University of Notre Dame
400 Main Building
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556

Dear Father Jenkins:

I write in regard to the decision of the University of Notre Dame to honor President Barack Obama at its commencement this year. I wish personally to express my disappointment in solidarity with the other expressions of disappointment you have received.

Other decisions of the University in past years have tarnished the clarity of the University's Catholic identity. However, the present one gives rise to grave concern as to what message the University is giving to the Catholics of our nation when it honors a public figure who, regardless of his office as President and the good work he wishes to accomplish, stands so strongly against and has already acted contrary to the Church's moral teaching on the right to life of the unborn.

If Notre Dame does not alter its present course, it will be difficult for me to offer support for the University on any level.

I fully realize the difficult decisions which you must make as the administrator of the University in this day and age. However, the invitation to President Obama was not necessary and extremely disappointing.

I appreciate your serious consideration of this letter.

With every prayerful wish, I am

Fraternally yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Gerald M. Barbarito
Bishop of Palm Beach

GMB/amr