

*Archdiocese of Saint Paul
and Minneapolis*

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

MOST REVEREND JOHN C. NIENSTEDT

June 7, 2011

RECEIVED

JUN 09 2011

The Honorable Governor Mark Dayton
Office of the Governor
130 State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Dayton,

I am writing to share with you my concerns regarding the current state budget situation that you are seeking to solve. I pray for you daily that you find the common ground that will protect the common good.

By "common good," I would include such considerations as: fulfilling the demands of justice and moral obligations to future generation, protecting the lives and dignity of those who are poor and vulnerable as well as controlling future debt and deficits. I am particularly concerned that you find a just framework for a budget that does not rely on disproportionate cuts in essential services to those living in poverty.

As Tim Marx, our new CEO of Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis, and I discussed last week, increasing the depth and breadth of poverty is bad fiscal policy and bad economic policy. Ignoring our responsibilities for those most at risk will require more costs in services as well as result in reduced productivity. All of us should expect to be able to meet our basic needs of housing, food and health care. Our children, in particular, should be guaranteed the opportunity to begin life with a healthy start.

I want to assure you that our Catholic congregations and agencies like Catholic Charities have stepped up their efforts to meet the needs of those who are suffering under this current economic decline. However our work is a shared responsibility with government as we seek to protect the common good of all members of our society, especially families who struggle to live with dignity under the stress of these difficult times.

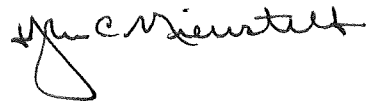
Let me conclude by encouraging you to put all of the tools that are at your disposal to work. Spending reductions, program delivery reform and increased revenue should all be on the table. It is important to remember that last year, state government funding got a significant boost from the federal stimulus package which enabled the state to assist the many in our society who are getting left behind.

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A state budget is a moral document since a central measure of any budget proposal is how it affects the poorest among us. The needs of the hungry, the homeless, the unemployed and the disabled must be of primary importance.

Thank you for your willingness to be of service to the State of Minnesota. Again, my prayers are with you.

Cordially yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John C. Nienstedt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "J" and "N".

The Most Reverend John C. Nienstedt
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

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