

ARCHBISHOP'S RESIDENCE
2809 S. CARROLLTON AVENUE
NEW ORLEANS 18, LOUISIANA

July 31, 1956
Feast of St. Ignatius

INTEGRATION IN
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

TO THE CLERGY, RELIGIOUS AND LAITY,
ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW ORLEANS.

Dearly beloved in Christ:

We regret that certain conditions and circumstances have made it inadvisable to announce at an earlier date our decision regarding the important issue of race relations in our Catholic school system. Although some important items must still be clarified, we consider the present moment opportune to state the following for the guidance of parents, teachers and priests who share our responsibility and interest in our Catholic schools:

1. Our declaration against racial segregation as outlined in the pastoral letter published in the churches of the Archdiocese on February 11, 1956, still holds true as a guide of Catholic conduct. That statement has the support of outstanding Catholic theologians, teachers and of the Sovereign Pontiff in many official pronouncements and allocutions. Even as recently as May 5, 1956, our present Holy Father, Pope Pius XII, happily reigning, in answer to the question: "Who is my neighbor?" declared: "The neighbor is every man, the Negro of Central Africa or the Indian in the forests of the Amazon, awaiting spiritual goods more than material ones." As Catholics we cannot choose our beliefs according to individual taste but must accept what the Church teaches in virtue of her apostolic authority under the mandate of Christ to all the Apostles: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you all days, even unto the consummation of the world."
(Matt. XXVIII, 19-20)

2. Certain difficulties still remain and we are not now prepared to introduce

integration generally; therefore, we deem it necessary to postpone integration in schools in which it has not yet been effected at least until September 1957. In the meantime we hope to overcome difficulties and make necessary preparations.

3. Integration will be organized gradually in one grade at a time of our elementary schools, and under moderate conditions which will be made known in advance.

4. Catholic schools which are now integrated are expected to follow their present plans without interruption.

5. During the year our Catholic attitude will be further explained in all patience and charity to remove doubts, misunderstandings and other difficulties.

We again assure you that we have no other interest in this problem than to carry out the principles of Christian charity and justice towards all and to bring about that unity in the Mystical Body of Christ to which St. Paul referred so eloquently when he addressed the Ephesians (IV, 1-6): "I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, exhort you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all humility and meekness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, careful to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace: one body and one Spirit, even as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one Baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and throughout all, and in us all."

We are convinced that our problem will be solved only in the spiritual atmosphere of prayer, sincere earnest and united prayer, inspired by confidence in the promise of Christ: "I say to you further, that if two of you shall agree on earth about anything at all for which they ask, it shall be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together for my sake, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. XVIII, 19-20)

Under the inspiration of this promise and mindful of the great power which our Blessed Lady exercises at the throne of Her Divine Son, we hereby ordain that there shall be held in all the churches of the Archdiocese and in all convents and Catholic institutions a public Novena in preparation for the Feast of the Assumption of Our Blessed Lady into Heaven. This Novena shall begin on Monday, August 6, the Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord on Mount Tabor and continue until Tuesday, August 14,

the Eve of the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven. The exercises of the Novena shall include Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament, the recitation of five decades of the Rosary, the Litany of our Blessed Lady and Sacramental Benediction.

May this message be received in the spirit of charity which marks the true union with Christ Jesus, whose charity embraced all men as He hung upon the Cross of Calvary; may we pray for that peace which harbors no wrath, no hatred and no ill will towards any class of human beings; let us cultivate in word and deed that unity of spirit which is in conformity with the Divine Will and the mind of Holy Mother Church. In this spirit as your Shepherd in Christ I humbly and with all the sincerity of my heart pray that we may all be worthy to be included in the mercy and love of our Divine Savior Who spurned no one as He looked out upon the world and prayed to His Heavenly Father: "Into Thy hands I commend my spirit".

+ JOSEPH FRANCIS RUMMEL,
Archbishop of New Orleans