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DIOCESE OF MARQUETTE

444 SOUTH FOURTH STREET

P. O. BOX 530

MARQUETTE, MICHIGAN 49855

BISHOP'S OFFICE

February 26, 1971

The People of the Parishes of Sault Ste. Marie

Dear Friends in Christ:

After careful study and discussion, the Diocesan Board of Education has recommended to me that a consolidated elementary school in Sault Ste. Marie should not be established. Their recommendation is based on these facts: 1) small pre-registration for a consolidated school; 2) inadequate teaching staff; 3) financial problems. The Sault Ste. Marie Catholic Board of Education has made the same recommendation.

It is with great reluctance that I regretfully concur that a consolidated school should not be established.

I sincerely thank all those who labored under difficult circumstances to continue Catholic schooling in Sault Ste. Marie. I know that every effort was made to explore every possibility for continuing some type of school. Under the circumstances, however, a school does not seem possible. Decline in population and severe financial problems cannot be ignored.

We can all take heart, however, and find reason for enthusiasm in the plans that are being developed to provide religious education for all the people of the Sault, from pre-school age to adulthood. You are fortunate indeed to have a number of religious Sisters available to help develop this program of religious education and to go even beyond that to a broader program of pastoral service.

You are living in trying times. A change-over from one type of program to another takes courage and faith. In the past, the people of Sault Ste. Marie have manifested a great amount of both. Today, you are called upon once again to exercise leadership in a new way in the field of Christian education. I know you will rise to the occasion and meet the challenge. The religious education program and pastoral service program to be initiated in Sault Ste. Marie deserves everyone's fullest support. What you do in the Sault may well serve as a guide and model for other areas of the Diocese and even beyond.

I ask everyone--priests, religious and lay people--to cooperate wholeheartedly to meet this new challenge and to grasp this unique opportunity.

I am with you in spirit and prayer as you move ahead.

Sincerely yours in Our Lord,

Charles A. Salatka
Most Rev. Charles A. Salatka
Bishop of Marquette