

24 May 2007

His Eminence  
Seán Cardinal O'Malley, O.F.M.Cap., and  
Board of Trustees  
St. John's Seminary

**Eminence and Trustees:**

The morning after yesterday's meeting of the Board of Trustees finds me still uncomprehending and deeply distressed.

The way in which a \$65 million project was presented with no advance specific information that would allow study, evaluation, and consultation, and then be voted favorably is incomprehensible to me. The fact that no one in the Seminary was consulted, or even informed, about the proposal is incomprehensible to me. The fact that public events to announce the news were scheduled even before our meeting was held last night and are being carried out this morning is incomprehensible to me. Finally, the fact that announcements are being made to the public with no vote taken at all by the Corporate Members is not only incomprehensible to me, but is contrary to law. Last night's meeting was a burlesque of the Board of Trustees and of the ways of proceeding of any serious board.

Even more distressing to me is the substance of last night's "deliberations." Exaggerated statements about a projected budgetary deficit for FY08 served as the point of departure for the presentation, the explicit recommendations of the Congregation for Catholic Education were dismissed peremptorally, a proposal was made to remedy a problem that we do not have, the remedy proposed is that the seminary alienate assets that are needed to assure its future fiscal viability, and all this was done in the name of assuring our financial stability and viability. In my judgment, all of this is utterly preposterous.

For the second time in three years, RCAB plunders the assets of St. John's Seminary. In 2004, the seminary conveyed to RCAB assets worth about \$56 million and received in recompense \$21 million and a promissory note for \$4.8 million. If the seminary were in possession of even the cash represented by the note, our financial "problems" would be greatly eased. Instead the seminary is presented as "not able to make it financially." Now, assets of the seminary will be taken and combined again with assets of RCAB, who will in turn sell them to BC. The Chancellor stated emphatically

last night that the seminary will not be recompensed according to the value of the assets conveyed, but the \$65 million to be derived from this sale will be applied "where it is needed." Clearly, in this disposition the seminary is considered as not one of the "needs" of the archdiocese – even as a beneficiary of its own assets.

I do not wish to be associated with an organization that shows so little respect for people who have been charged with responsibility for it and so little respect for truth.

After prayerful consideration and with the support of Fr. Dominic Izzo, O.P., my Prior Provincial, I hereby resign as Rector of St. John's Seminary, effective immediately.

I will be present at the ordination on 26 May, not as representative of the seminary, but as friend of the *ordinandi* (one of whom has asked me to vest him). Likewise at the ordinations on 2 June in Manchester and on 3 June in Portland, I will be present only as a friend of those being ordained, not in representation of the seminary.

I ask for your prayers and promise you mine.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. John A. Farren, O.P.  
Rector