



UNIVERSITY OF MARY
America's Leadership University

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April 20, 2010

Mrs. Rebecca Raber, Director of Choral Music
Shanley High School
5600 25th Street South
Fargo, ND 58104-7123

Dear Mrs. Raber and members of the Shanley Choirs:

I hasten to send you my warm admiration and delight at your Sunday afternoon concert. Your performances were nothing short of astonishing. You must hear this every time you sing, but for such young voices to come together into such a mature and rich sound is no small accomplishment. It was really, really good ... bravi!

There was this other thing: As a priest, I have a sense for happiness and sorrow in the midst of life's complications. And I've worked a very long time with young people and I can see things that others might miss. Whatever the difficulties or troubles in each of your lives, you should know how inspiring it was to watch the music and your place in it lift you up and beyond into a space of beauty and triumphant sound. There is a greatness of soul which Mrs. Raber has held out to you, in the form of music, but it was each of you who have accepted your gift and made it your own. To see that deep personal transformation, and to see it in that lovely new church, was something I shall not forget for some time. To all of you: well done!

Finally, I thank you for asking me to play some small part in the festivities. It was an honor for me. To each and all, God bless you!

In Mary,

Father James P. Shea
President