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Three high schools make top 50 'honor roll'

St. Thomas Aquinas High School in Fort Lauderdale, Msgr. Edward Pace High School in Miami and Christopher Columbus High School in Miami have been named to the first annual Catholic High School Honor Roll, a selection of the 50 best secondary schools in America.

"What a wonderful tribute to the quality of our archdiocesan Catholic schools," said Archbishop John C. Favalora. "We can all be proud of the fine education our Catholic schools render."

St. Thomas and Pace are operated by the archdiocese. Columbus is operated by the Marist Brothers.

The schools were judged on three categories: academics, Catholic identity and civic education. St. Thomas was ranked in the top 20 in academics, having had 29 National Merit Finalists in its Class of 2004. Columbus was cited for giving both faculty and students the opportunity to attend daily Mass on campus. Pace was praised for having Future Business Leaders of America among its student clubs.

The primary goal of the honor roll is to encourage schools to educate their students as effectively as possible, in a way that integrates Catholic faith and prepares students for active engagement with the world.

The honor roll was produced by the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty, an international research and educational organization based in Michigan, in consultation with a national advisory board comprised of Catholic college presidents and noted Catholic scholars.