

LOCAL FEATURES

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CCHS principal honored, but not surprised, at national award

**By Joanne Malene
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CANTON — Compared in size to other high schools in Stark County, Canton Central Catholic is on the small side. But, in terms of academic achievement, the school is right up there with the big guys.

It was recently selected as one of the 50 best Catholic high schools in the nation and one of the top four in Ohio, based on its commitment to academic excellence, Catholic identity and civic education.

Father Robert W. Kaylor, principal of Central Catholic, was delighted at the news but not surprised that his school received the award – a place on the Catholic High School Honor Roll, an independent project of the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty, an international research and educational organization based in Grand Rapids, Mich.

“This award can be shared by many, many people,” Father Kaylor said. “It was a tremendous honor. Knowing the quality of Catholic schools across the country, being selected as one of the top four in Ohio was just exceptional.

“The credit for this award, though, really goes to those who prepare our students – to the parents who are the teachers of the faith, to the grade schools who prepare them in their faith and academically, and to our faculty here at Central Catholic.”

The purpose of the Catholic High School Honor Roll is to recognize schools that embrace a vibrant Catholic identity and instill an appreciation of the social, political, and economic dimensions of the world.

Having strength in three areas was the key to being placed on the Honor Roll, according to Kevin Schmiesing, the project director. The listing “reflects the diversity of Catholicism in the United States. What is common to all of the schools is outstanding commitment to the educational mission of the Church,” he said.

Gerald Bradley, professor of law at the University of Notre Dame and an Advisory Board member, said in a news release that the Honor Roll serves as a benchmark for all who are seeking an education informed by faith. “It draws attention to schools that are contributing in extraordinary ways to the moral and intellectual formation of young people,” he said.

Father Kaylor stressed the strengths of a Catholic high school education. "We appreciate the fact that our school is recognized for its academic program. Last year, more than \$6.3 million in scholarships were earned by our 146 students, 95 percent of whom go to college. Our ACT and SAT test scores are above the national average, and we have a 100 percent graduation rate. "The area of religion is what we do in the classroom, but the award acknowledges that we are living the Gospel message and encouraging our young people outside the classroom," he added. "We are partnering with [Louisville] St. Thomas Aquinas High School in building a Habitat [for Humanity] house, our students work on the American Heart Association drive, and for the Alzheimer's organization."

Other Ohio schools named to the Honor Roll were Padua Franciscan High School in Parma, Calvert High School in Tiffin and Catholic Central High School in Springfield.

Joanne Malene covers news and features for the Exponent in Stark and Portage