

Hurricane Katrina fails to deter Archbishop Lipscomb's dedication to Catholic Education - St. Jude Educational Institute among Top 50 Catholic High Schools Named for 2005

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (Sept. 8, 2005) –The [Catholic High School Honor Roll](#) today announced the second annual selection of its best 50 secondary schools in America. Building on the success of last year's program, this year's Honor Roll will continue to serve as an invaluable resource for students, parents and benefactors. By recognizing the nation's top 50 high schools, the Honor Roll promotes quality Catholic secondary education.

Among this year's top 50 is Montgomery's St. Jude Educational Institute (www.saintjudeschool.com). The co-ed, 125-student school is run by the Archdiocese of Mobile and is this year also recognized as a category leader for its strong civic education.

After hearing of this great honor, Archbishop Oscar H. Lipscomb felt compelled to comment, despite the absence of electricity in his archdiocesan offices. With Hurricane Katrina hitting just one week prior, the Archbishop's response during such a chaotic time speaks of his dedication to quality Catholic education. Dictating his statement by flashlight, the Archbishop issued the following statement:

“I am grateful that St. Jude Educational Institute, Montgomery, has received this distinct honor. Being recognized by the Catholic High School Honor Roll is a well-deserved recognition, especially in view of past obstacles in enrollment and financing. I applaud all of the administrators, faculty, staff and students. Their dedication has helped make St. Jude Educational Institute a success.”

More than half of the Honor Roll schools are repeat performers from last year. Honorees include co-ed, male and female schools, and ranged from the 24-student Holy Rosary Academy in Anchorage, Alaska, to St. Thomas Aquinas High School in Fort Lauderdale, Florida with more than 2,100 students. The state of Florida led the way with seven schools selected, followed by Texas and New York (6 each) and Pennsylvania and Illinois (5 each). In all, schools from 21 states made the Honor Roll. In addition to the Top 50 list, the Honor Roll also published the top 20 finalists in three categories that are important to overall excellence: academics, Catholic identity, and civic education. To see a complete list of the schools, please go to the Catholic High School Honor Roll Web site at www.chshonor.org.

Advisory board member Father Bernard O'Connor, president of De Sales University, said the Honor Roll provides a valuable service. “It is important to highlight the accomplishments of schools that are contributing in exemplary ways to the moral and intellectual formation their students,” he said.

The primary goal of the Honor Roll is to encourage schools to educate students as effectively as possible, in a way that integrates Catholic faith and prepares students for active engagement with the world. By supporting this constructive competition, the

Honor Roll provides insight into the character of Catholic secondary education and calls everyone to improve the academic and spiritual formation given to America's youth. In promoting rigorous educations, the Honor Roll desires to better prepare students for fruitful vocations in politics, business, and the Church.

Strength in each of the three areas—academics, Catholic identity, and civic education—was key to placing on the Honor Roll, according to the project's director, Dr. Kevin Schmiesing. "It is encouraging to see so many outstanding examples of Catholic education," he said. "Though the schools represent a diverse array of types—including Christian Brothers, Franciscan, Legionary, diocesan and independent—what they have in common is a commitment to excellence in the areas that we examine."

The Catholic High School Honor Roll is an independent project of the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion & Liberty, an international research and educational organization based in Grand Rapids, Mich. The Honor Roll was produced in consultation with a national advisory board comprised of Catholic college presidents and noted Catholic scholars. For more on Acton, please go to www.acton.org

About the Acton Institute

With its commitment to pursue a society that is free and virtuous, the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty is a leading voice in the national environmental and social policy debate. The Acton Institute is uniquely positioned to comment on the sound economic and moral foundations necessary to sustain humane environmental and social policies.

The Acton Institute is a nonprofit, ecumenical think tank located in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The Institute works internationally to "promote a free and virtuous society characterized by individual liberty and sustained by religious principles." For more on the Acton Institute, please visit www.acton.org.