

## Champaign school is nationally recognized

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CHAMPAIGN — The High School of Saint Thomas More was included on a list of the 50 best secondary schools in America by The Catholic High School Honor Roll.

The Honor Roll is 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. The list was produced in consultation with a national advisory board comprised of Catholic college presidents and noted Catholic scholars.

This was the second year the group has published a Top 50 list, and the first time a school from the Diocese of Peoria has been named.

**“IT’S A** true honor for our school in just our sixth year,” said Tim Millage, principal. “It validates what many have done along the way for us.”

The newest of the seven Catholic high schools in the Diocese of Peoria, Saint Thomas More opened in the year 2000 with an enrollment of 70. It has grown steadily and this year has 315 students.

Strength in each of three areas — academics, Catholic identity and civic

education — was key to selection on the Honor Roll, according to project leaders. Lists of Top 20 finalists in each of those areas were also compiled, with The High School of Saint Thomas More named a finalist in the “Catholic Identity” category.

That honor particularly pleased Millage, who said it reflected the school’s embracing of Bishop Jenky’s vision of schools being “Catholic intensive” rather than “Catholic lite.”

**“IT IS** who we are today and the entire time we are a high school,” said Millage. “We always have to work on our Catholic identity and maintain it, and it changes with the needs of each student.”

The High School of Saint Thomas More was one of five schools from Illinois to make the Top 50 list.

Millage said that applying for the recognition involved an extensive self-review process that “was good for us whether we made the honor roll or not.”

“We’ve been recognized for our beginning,” said Millage. “Now it’s important to have a great middle. We have so much more work to do.”