

# The Miami Herald

## School thanks its nuns for rank

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**Archbishop Coleman Carroll High recruited some spiritual special forces -- an international team of nuns - to teach their students.**

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Archbishop Coleman F. Carroll High, which opened its doors to students eight years ago, has recently been noted as one of the top 50 Catholic schools in the country.

Perhaps it got there with some spiritually enlightened help.

Father Michael W. Davis, the supervising principal, recruited a team of nuns to add a religious flair to the school, at 10300 SW 167th Ave.

"The presence of religious women and men on the staff of the school is a wonderful way for the students to concretely witness the presence of the church," Davis said.

The yearly top 50 list, hosted by an organization called the Catholic High School Honor Roll, recognizes Catholic schools nationwide that excel in academics, Catholic identity and civic education.

This year's list also included Belen Jesuit Preparatory School in West Miami-Dade. Another Miami-Dade school, Christopher Columbus High, made the list last year.

Archbishop Carroll ranked among the top 20 in the

Catholic identity category. According to Davis, this achievement had a lot to do with the nuns, such as Sister Lourdes, the campus minister, who is from the Carmelite Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Los Angeles. Lourdes was one of the first sisters to join the Archbishop Carroll faculty four years ago.

The pilgrimage to the school was inspired by a friendship Davis struck with a group of Carmelite sisters living in Miami. Although some of them were eager to teach teens, they didn't have a high school where they could be placed.

So Davis petitioned the Carmelite's mother superior in Los Angeles for permission.

"I told them what a great opportunity for you to help us create a quality Catholic environment here," he said. "They knew they could help us from the ground up."

Today, the school has eight nuns: four Carmelite sisters, three from the Daughters of Mary Mother of Mercy (DMMM) from Nigeria and one, Sister Silvia, from the order of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM) in Spain.

The nuns are all educated women, with one or more master's degrees in a slew of fields. For example, Sister Theresa, DMMM, who holds a master's degree in the culinary arts and hospitality management, requested a

position in the school's cafeteria.

"It would have never occurred to me to assign a sister to cook. But she said 'Father, this is what I like to do -- the ministry of feeding people well,'" said Davis, laughing.

So far, the arrangement seems to be working well for everyone. Last year, three students headed to California and are seriously considering sisterhood, according to Davis.

"It's an awareness of the reality of Christ in the world," Lourdes said of the sister's effect on the students. "They're a part of our lives as much as we're a part of theirs."

As much as the sisters have done for the school's students, Caridad Unzueta, the dean of academics, said credit is due to the entire faculty.

"We have very innovative teachers who come to me and say let's try this and that," Unzueta said. The school specifies that students must take four years of math, instead of three.

Unzueta said the last year is critical for college math courses. "But there are just some kids who are not going to make it to trigonometry so we offer accounting."

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