

# DIOCESE OF ORANGE



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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### AWARD WINNING DIOCESE OF ORANGE PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS OPEN THEIR DOORS FOR NATIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

*Diocesan schools have been recognized five times with the prestigious National Blue Ribbon Honor*

**ORANGE, Calif., (January 19, 2007)** – The Roman Catholic Diocese of Orange will again open its 43 highly acclaimed faith based institutions throughout Orange County to future students and their families, January 28 – February 2, 2007. National Catholic Schools week is an annual celebration of parochial education that allows families to study and learn about Catholic education. In an era of dwindling resources and elective offerings, Diocesan and parish schools provide a lower student-to-teacher ratio, fine arts programs, community service, physical education, before/after school care and above average student achievement.

“Diocesan schools have maintained a well rounded curriculum including many unique programs that are not offered in other school systems. We feel that religious education and dedication to community service are essential elements in a young student’s development. Parochial education seeks to do more with less and instills a strong sense of civic responsibility in its students and faculty. We have a proven record of success and boast a high school graduation rate considerably higher than comparable institutions,” said Rev. Gerald Horan, OSM, superintendent of Diocese of Orange schools.

According to the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), a standardized test measuring the skills and achievement of students from kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade, Diocese of Orange students rank in the top third in the nation. The more than 19,000 OC catholic school students are also more likely to graduate from high school than public school students, according to the California Department of Education.

Five OC catholic schools have attained the highest US Department of Education distinction through the *No Child Left Behind Act-Blue Ribbon School Program*. This federal program was enacted to honor public and private K-12 schools that are either academically superior in their states or that demonstrate dramatic gains in student achievement. Private schools are nominated for this prestigious award by the Council for

American Private Education (CAPE). These recognized schools include: Santa Margarita High School in Rancho Santa Margarita, Our Lady Queen of Angels School in Newport Beach, St. Edward the Confessor School in Dana Point, St. Cecilia School in Tustin and St. Bonaventure School in Huntington Beach.

“We are blessed to have been recognized five times by the US Department of Education as National Blue Ribbon winners for academic performance and dramatic gains in student achievement. We are very proud of our students, teachers and parents and look forward to continued growth and academic success,” said Fr. Gerald Horan.

The Office of Faith Formation within the Roman Catholic Diocese of Orange provides catholic school options that are dynamic, inclusive, diverse, and academically challenging – all with a foundation in catholic teachings. Established in 1976, the Diocese of Orange encompasses 59 diocesan parishes serving the more than 1.2 million Catholics in Orange County. All schools in the diocese are full-term accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and the Western Catholic Education Association (WCEA).

National Catholic Schools Week is a joint project of the National Catholic Educational Association and the United Conference of Catholic Bishops for the nation’s 7,800 catholic schools. For more information on events and individual schools please contact the Office of Faith Formation at 714-282-3065.

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