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CATHOLIC EDUCATION FOUNDATION

PRESS RELEASE

Catholic Elementary, Secondary Schools and Catholic Colleges: An Interdependent System

Catholic Education Foundation Launches Program to Promote Cooperation

Rochester, NY, June 28, 2010:

The Catholic Education Foundation announced today a new venture called "Catholic Elementary, Secondary Schools and Catholic Colleges: An Interdependent System," in collaboration with The Cardinal Newman Society. The goal of this venture is to expand and strengthen the cooperation and relationship that Catholic elementary and secondary schools have with Catholic colleges.

Each element of the Catholic education system fulfills an indispensable aspect of the Church's mandate to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. This new venture aims to make this mission more effective by developing concrete ways for each level to cooperate with the others.

One of the issues that will be addressed is how Catholic colleges can support the work of Catholic elementary and secondary schools. For many decades, Catholic grade schools and high schools have been effective and reliable feeders for Catholic colleges. A recent study from the University of Notre Dame suggests, however, that this support may not always be reciprocated. The study, *Faith, Finances and the Future: The Notre Dame Study of U.S. Pastors* found "that 66% of pastors did not perceive the mission of their school to be supported by Catholic institutions of higher education" (Quantitative Findings, 23). As a means of facilitating closer collaboration between Catholic high schools and colleges, the Catholic Education Foundation will be launching a new program called the "Interdependence Project." The Cardinal Newman Society, a national organization to promote Catholic higher education, will assist efforts to pair solid Catholic high schools and colleges as a means of fostering their cooperation with each other.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Another aspect of this venture involves a focus on evaluating Catholic identity within the primary and secondary levels of the Catholic education system. The Catholic Education Foundation is initiating a program to help Catholic grade schools and high schools assess their commitment to sustaining a strong Catholic identity in every aspect of the life, work and witness of their schools.

To this end, the Catholic Education Foundation will be promoting a new instrument called the *Catholic School Identity Assessment*. This tool will be made available to any Catholic grade school or high school that is interested in assessing the level of Catholic identity in their school. This program will soon be piloted by schools in San Antonio, Boston, Colorado Springs and Youngstown. This tool will help the schools assess areas of strength and weakness regarding their Catholic identity both at a particular moment in time and over a period of time. Hence, it is a useful diagnostic instrument both for short-term assessment and longitudinally.

A final aspect of this venture involves an awareness campaign to educate the public on how many tax dollars Catholic schools save the government-supported education system. This campaign developed by the Catholic Education Foundation includes a plan to print bumper stickers that read: "My Catholic school saves taxpayers \$\$\$." Catholic schools can also order a yard sign that reads: "This Catholic school saves you \$X per year in taxes." The sign will bear the school's name and logo; the number will be specific to the amount of money that particular Catholic school saves taxpayers based on its enrollment and the cost per student to educate students in that district's public school system.

The ultimate goal is to pass legislation that would offer vouchers, tax credits or some other instrument to reduce the financial burden on those parents who wish to send their children to religiously-oriented schools. The Notre Dame study noted above urges: "State legislatures have to be moved to action, the Catholic community mobilized, public leaders made to take notice, and all stakeholders persuaded to see the civic value of supporting religious schools with tax dollars" (Recommendations, 49). The awareness campaign strongly supports these recommendations.

"The Catholic Education Foundation has done outstanding work toward renewing and strengthening Catholic elementary and secondary education," said Mr. Patrick J. Reilly, President of The Cardinal Newman Society. "We are thrilled to support this good work and the important cooperation of faithful Catholic colleges with our Catholic schools."

Fr. Peter Stravinskis of the Catholic Education Foundation, noted the following: "The support of the Cardinal Newman Society is deeply appreciated and most encouraging, especially since what the Catholic Education Foundation is promoting at the present moment for our elementary and secondary schools is what the Cardinal Newman Society has been promoting for Catholic higher education for well over a decade."

A blue-ribbon panel has been formed comprised of educational leaders in Catholic colleges and in elementary and secondary schools. Panelists include:

- Sean Cardinal O'Malley, OFM Cap., Archbishop of Boston
- The Reverend Michael Scanlan, TOR, Chancellor of Franciscan University of Steubenville
- Noted author Mr. Kenneth Whitehead served in the Reagan administration as the Department of Education's director of international education programs and later as deputy assistant secretary for higher-education programs, and then as assistant secretary for postsecondary education.
- Sister Elizabeth Anne Allen, OP, Vice President for Academic Affairs at Aquinas College, Nashville, TN
- Sr. Marie Pappas, C.R., Associate Superintendent for Mission Effectiveness, Archdiocese of New York
- Dr. William Thierfelder, President of Belmont Abbey College, Belmont, NC

For more information about this collaborative venture, please visit the Catholic Education Foundation's website at www.catholiceducationfoundation.com.