



For Immediate Release

TRAVERSE CITY ST. FRANCIS EARNS NATIONAL TOP 50 RANKING

St. Francis Named to Prestigious Catholic High School Honor Roll for Second Time

October 25, 2010: Traverse City, Mich. – On Monday, October 25th, The Most Reverend Bernard A. Hebda (Bishop of the Diocese of Gaylord) gave a surprise announcement to the faculty and students of Traverse City St. Francis High School that their high school has been named to the **National Catholic School Honor Roll as one of the best 50 Catholic secondary schools in the United States**. This is the second time for St. Francis High School to receive this recognition resulting in four consecutive years as part of the National Catholic School Honor Roll covering years 2008-2012. They were first honored with this award in November 2008.

The National Catholic High School Honor Roll recently announced its selection of the best 50 Catholic secondary schools in the United States. The purpose of the Honor Roll is to recognize and encourage excellence in Catholic secondary education. It is a critical resource for parents and educators that distinguishes those schools that excel in three categories:

- Academic excellence
- Catholic identity
- Civic education

GTACS Superintendent Mike Buell shared his thoughts on learning of this recognition, “We constantly strive to assist our school families in forming their children’s hearts, minds, and souls in an effort to bring glory to God. The external recognition of our efforts by an organization as well-esteemed as the Acton Institute is humbling, yet very rewarding. This is truly an award delivered to the parents who make great personal sacrifice to provide their children with a Catholic education, and to each and every GTACS faculty member who works tirelessly to improve the formation and education of all of our students. All school accolades rest at the feet of our faculty, and I am so very proud of them and thankful for their dedication to our schools.”

St. Francis High School Principal, Erick Chittle, commented, “What is most pleasing about Top Fifty recognition is that it aligns with the mission of Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools. Acton rewards

schools that work very hard at infusing Catholicism through-out a rigorous curriculum. Top test scores are not enough for this award; the teachings of the Gospel and a vibrant prayer and Sacramental life must be evident in these schools. I am thankful to our staff – a staff committed to push each student to his or her fullest spiritual and academic potential. I am thankful to our parents who sacrifice to partner with us in this mission. Finally, I am thankful to our students whose dedication to their faith and academics brings me great hope.”

In celebration of the announcement, students at all four schools were treated to chocolate milk and cookies to celebrate the occasion. Parents in all grades received email notification from Superintendent Mike Buell on the afternoon of October 25th.

To see a list of the top 50 schools, as well as lists of the 10 honorable mention schools in each category, visit www.chshonor.org.

About The National Catholic High School Honor Roll

The Honor Roll is an independent project of the Acton Institute, an international research and educational organization. It is produced in consultation with an advisory board comprised of Catholic college presidents and scholars. **Advisory board member** Very Rev. David M. O’Connell, President of Catholic University of America, said **the** Honor Roll’s evaluation method is indispensable. “Catholic schools must examine themselves on a regular basis using a well-rounded approach that assesses adherence to the Church’s educational calling,” he said. “The Honor Roll strengthens schools by encouraging high standards and vibrant Catholicism.”

In its seven years, the Honor Roll has seen over **50 percent of America’s nearly 1,300 Catholic high schools** participate at least once. The best schools demonstrate a balanced excellence, which includes an active Catholic culture, sound college preparation and integration of Church teaching in all departments. These schools also display sound moral, catechetical and civic formation that prepares students for vocations in the world as political, religious, scientific, and business leaders.

The National Catholic High School Honor Roll is a list of the top 50 Catholic high schools in the United States, where schools are examined on the criteria of academic excellence, Catholic identity, and civic education. The purpose of the Honor Roll is to recognize and encourage excellence in Catholic secondary education, and is a resource for parents, schools, donors, and colleges.

The Honor Roll is an independent project of the Acton Institute, an international research and educational organization. The Honor Roll was produced in consultation with a national advisory board comprised of Catholic college presidents and Catholic scholars. For more on Acton, please go to www.acton.org.

About Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools

Established in 1877, Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools are dedicated to providing a Catholic education – ensuring educational quality for all families willing to enter into a partnership to develop each child to his or her fullest spiritual and academic potential. Education is provided in grades

preschool through high school.

Enrollment in preschool-12th grade is 1,072 students for the 2010-11 school year.

###

For follow-up questions, contact GTACS Communications Coordinator, Maureen DeYoung, at (231) 946-8038 ext. 6020 or MDeyoung@gtacs.org