

National Catholic Educational Association Convention Opens at Baltimore Convention Center

Washington, D.C.— The National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) will open its 104th annual convention and exposition Tuesday, April 10, at the Baltimore Convention Center. NCEA is meeting in Baltimore for only the third time in the association's 104-year history. Previous conventions were held in the city in 1916 and 2000.

Convention keynote speakers are Most Rev. Pietro Sambì, apostolic nuncio to the United States; Sister Clare Fitzgerald, recipient of the 2006 NCEA Elizabeth Ann Seton President's award; Mike Patin, known as the "Billy Crystal of religious education"; and Joe Garagiola, Jr., senior vice president of baseball operations for Major League Baseball.

Convention liturgies will be celebrated by Cardinal William Keeler, archbishop of Baltimore; Cardinal Justin Rigali, archbishop of Philadelphia; Most Rev. Donald Wuerl, archbishop of Washington, D.C.; Most Rev. Paul Loverde, bishop of Arlington; and Most Rev. William Francis Malooly, auxiliary bishop of Baltimore. Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday liturgies will be celebrated at the convention center. On Thursday, two Masses will be offered at the Basilica of the Assumption.

The theme for this year's four-day convention is "Anchor of Faith-Harbor of Light," reflecting both Baltimore's location as a harbor for ships and for faith and the fact that education and faith are anchors to one's identity. More than 7,000 delegates from all levels of Catholic education - elementary and secondary schools, religious education programs, seminaries, colleges and universities, governing boards and superintendents of schools - will be able to select from more than 400 professional development sessions. Topics include special education, early childhood development, technology, religious education, governance, curriculum, legal issues and public policy.

On the exposition floor, more than 700 booths will display the latest in uniforms, technology, school furnishings, textbooks, fundraising products and other items.

The 15th annual convocation of the National Association of Parish Catechetical Directors (NPCD) runs concurrent with the NCEA meeting at both the convention center and the Hyatt Regency hotel. NPCD is the national professional membership association for parish catechetical leaders, with more than 1,300 members. NPCD is a component of NCEA.

Additionally, the Baltimore host committee has arranged a variety of leisure-time activities, including a Celebration of the Arts at the Meyerhoff Symphony Hall on Monday, April 9, a First Night celebration in the Inner Harbor on Tuesday, April 10, and Teachers' Night Out on Thursday, April 12.

During the convention, awards will be presented to these five outstanding leaders in Catholic education:

The Catherine T. McNamee, CSJ Award, which honors leadership in promoting a vision of Catholic education that welcomes and serves cultural and economic diversity and enhances service for student with diverse needs, will be presented to **Brother Michael Collins, FSC, Ed.D.**

Brother Michael Collins, president of De La Salle High School in Minneapolis, Minn., has promoted the concept and value of diversity at his school; in his work as a leader on the NCEA Secondary Schools Department executive committee; and as a speaker, author and facilitator to others on the topic. For many, he represents the conscience of the association in the area of diversity.

Brother Michael has discussed the needs of inclusive education for many years. He has served on committees in his LaSallian Christian Brothers community, the region he serves and on the national scene. He coauthored an NCEA publication with D. Shane Merton on the topic and was the inspiration for the LEAD (Leadership in Equity, Access and Diversity) program jointly sponsored by NCEA and Loyola Marymount University.

His school is an institution where diversity is celebrated; it is the most culturally

diverse in the state of Minnesota. More than 35 percent of the students are of color, 25 percent are of other faith traditions and more than 50 percent receive financial aid.

A De La Salle graduate himself, Brother Michel returned to his alma mater as president in 1991 when enrollment had bottomed to 306 students. Today the high school enrolls 600 students. At a time when recruiting teachers of color is more and more difficult, the family at De La Salle is impressively diverse and models the leadership Brother Michael has established.

The C. Albert Koob Merit Award, honoring a distinguished Catholic educator who has made extraordinary contributions on a regional and national level, will be presented to **Sister Dominica Rocchio, SC, Ed.D.**

For more than 25 years, Sister of Charity Dominica Rocchio served in central office leadership in the Archdiocese of Newark, working on behalf of Catholic school communities. She retired last year after 14 years as superintendent of schools. For 11 of those years she also was secretary of Catholic education. During this time, Sister Dominica worked aggressively to encourage marketing initiatives, to consider new forms of school governance, to challenge the archdiocesan school council to greater levels of consultation and to network with her colleagues. Sister Dominica's energy and congeniality have helped her champion the causes she pursues. Her knack for "getting things accomplished" has earned her recognition as a Catholic educator who has helped to highlight the achievements of Catholic schools in the public arena.

She has served with distinction on many boards of secondary schools and colleges. She fostered the aims of school accreditation with service as a commissioner of the Commission on Secondary Schools of the Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges. Sister Dominica has served on the advisory committees of public policy and education for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and worked tirelessly to implement the National Directory of Catechesis. She served as a member of the NCEA board of directors and as vice president of CACE.

The Msgr. John F. Meyers Award, which honors an individual who has supported Catholic education at any level or in any educational setting, will be presented

to **Catherine Hickey, Ph.D.**

As secretary for education/superintendent of schools in the Archdiocese of New York, Dr. Catherine Hickey provides ongoing leadership for the largest and most economically diverse Catholic school program in the nation, with more than 100,000 pupils in more than 300 schools.

Dr. Hickey has orchestrated a cohesive work environment by allowing each member of her staff to use his or her particular talents. Her encouragement and support go far beyond the staff of the Office of the Superintendent of Schools, however. She instituted a committee system that includes principals and teachers throughout the archdiocese. Educators from both elementary and secondary schools advise, decide and, in some cases, create policy. This opportunity to sit on an archdiocesan committee has given educators a sense of ownership, responsibility and accountability.

She has worked tirelessly at building and sustaining relationships with dioceses, archdioceses and religious communities on national and international levels. In the political arena, she has been a staunch supporter of the rights of nonpublic schools.

Catherine Hickey has met current challenges, among other ways, by supporting nine special education programs throughout the archdiocese and supporting scholarship initiatives such as Be a Student's Friend, the Cardinal's Scholarship Program, Student-Sponsor Partnerships and the Inner City Scholarship Fund. She appointed the first director for inner-city schools in the archdiocese and collaborated with the late Cardinal John O'Connor in creating the first Office of Educational Development.

The Leonard F. DeFiore Parental Choice Advocate Award, honoring an individual who has demonstrated outstanding leadership in promoting full and fair parental choice in education, goes to **Sara Eide**.

The Iowa Catholic conference is a collaborative effort of Catholics throughout Iowa that are skilled in areas relating to the Catholic Church in the state. Five conference committees – pro-life, social concerns, education, family life and communications – research and recommend issues to the board of directors for emphasis during the legislative year. Sara Eide joined the Iowa Catholic conference in 2000 and assumed

the leadership role in 2003. She is a true champion for Catholic education. As conference director, she led efforts to get the Iowa legislature to pass tax credit legislation that supports Catholic/nonpublic education in Iowa. She organized state and national support over a four-year period. A new state organization was formed to help get the Iowa House and Senate and the governor to sign the legislation. Iowa is only the third state in the U.S. to enact such tax credit support of nonpublic and Catholic schools.

The Emmaus Award for Excellence in Catechesis is presented by the National Association of Parish Catechetical Directors to an outstanding national leader in the field of catechesis who consistently has generated significant contributions to the mission of spreading the Gospel. This year's recipient is the **Most Rev. Donald W. Wuerl, S.T.D.**

Archbishop Donald W. Wuerl has made significant contributions to the field of Catholic catechesis and religious education. While bishop of Pittsburgh, he hosted "The Teaching of Christ," a television program he launched in 1990. It is now widely distributed through the Christian Associates Cable Channel and through national syndication. His best-selling adult catechism of the same name, now in its 30th year of publication, has been translated into more than 10 languages and is used throughout the world. His most recent book, "The Catholic Way," was published in 2001.

He was bishop of Pittsburgh for 18 years before being named archbishop of Washington in 2006. One of the archbishop's first initiatives after coming to Washington was to lead a gathering of more than 2,200 religious education leaders from throughout the archdiocese.

Archbishop Wuerl is chairman of the Committee on Catechesis of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and was deeply involved in creation of the National Directory for Catechesis and the U.S. Catholic Catechism for Adults. He received NCEA's Elizabeth Ann Seton award in 1995 in recognition of his contributions to Catholic education and was named chairman of the NCEA Board of directors in 2006.

NCEA is the largest private professional education association in the world. Founded

in 1904, the association's membership represents more than 200,000 educators serving 7.6 million students in Catholic education at all levels.