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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press Release

New Private (tuition-free) Catholic School to Open in New Haven

Hartford, Wednesday, February 9, 2005:

Formal announcement to be made by The Most Reverend Henry J. Mansell, Archbishop of Hartford, on Friday, **February 11, 2005**, at 10 am, at St. Ann Parish Center, 43 Jones Road, Hamden.

Archbishop Mansell is pleased to announce the opening of a new private Catholic school in New Haven. St. Martin de Porres Academy will open its doors to students in September 2005 as the first Nativity School in Connecticut. The Acorn Fund, a non-profit corporation based in New Haven, will support the school, serving students in Grades 5-8.

St. Martin de Porres Academy will provide a faith-based tuition-free education for children from low-income families in the greater New Haven area. The 11 hour extended day includes a strong academic program, tutoring, co-curricular activities and study periods, as well as three meals.

Archbishop Henry Mansell is most enthusiastic about this project, "From past assignments, I am very familiar with Nativity Schools and most impressed with their results. This program will address the need of an under-served population of children. The impact of a good education simply cannot be measured. We are talking about a better quality of life, for generations to come... all because of a good education. Nativity Schools have a track record. They provide quality private school education, Catholic School education, for families who might not otherwise dream of having such an opportunity."

Nativity Network Director Rev. John J. Podsiadlo, SJ stresses, "The collaboration between a governing board of committed lay people and the Archdiocese is based on mutual respect and trust. It will succeed through on-going dialog focused on shared vision and mission."

Mr. Dale R. Hoyt, Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Archdiocese says, "It was the success of other Nativity Schools that moved me in pursuing a relationship with the Nativity Network, at the request of Archbishop Mansell."

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The Jesuits opened the first Nativity School in 1971 to educate at-risk children in New York City. The mission was, and continues to be, to create quality, tuition-free schools for students who cannot afford a private school education. Since 1990 this model has been replicated in 45 schools in 20 states, focusing on middle-school years with a commitment of mentoring support for all students through high school and into college.

A lay Board of Trustees chaired by John J. Crawford, a member of the Acorn Fund, will govern St. Martin de Porres Academy. Jay Bowes of Madison, who will serve as President, will lead the school administration.

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