

Contact: Amy Lewis for Saint Thomas Academy, 651.552.9826

Deacon Mickey Friesen, Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, 651.291.4445

SAINT THOMAS ACADEMY ESTABLISHES GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP WITH ST. JOSEPH'S SEMINARY AND HIGH SCHOOL IN KITUI, KENYA

MENDOTA HEIGHTS, Minn., Feb. 10, 2010 – Saint Thomas Academy announced today a global partnership of solidarity with St. Joseph's Seminary and High School, an all-boys school in the Diocese of Kitui <<http://www.dioceseofkitui.org/>>, Kenya, dedicated to developing civic, spiritual and cultural leaders. Through the partnership, Saint Thomas and St. Joseph students will develop relationships with the aid of technology as they learn about each other's cultures, countries and living conditions.

“The partnership with St. Joseph's Seminary and High School starts a long-term, sustainable, and global project that goes beyond a financial commitment,” said Dr. Thomas Mich, headmaster of Saint Thomas Academy, “sharing many of the extraordinary resources we have in our school: our students, faculty and staff, academic program and co-curriculars. I think it really holds great promise for all involved.”

Father Thomas O'Brien, director of Catholic Identity and Mission at Saint Thomas Academy said, “I hope the partnership will help us recognize that while charitable giving is important and laudable, the giving of oneself on a fuller scale is even more important. I believe we will discover in conversations with St. Joseph's and among ourselves a variety of resources we can employ to achieve real solidarity across continents.”

Campus Minister J. Clancy '10 and Bishop Anthony Muheria of Kitui, announced the partnership Tuesday as the conclusion to Catholic Schools Week.

“What we have and what unites us is a bond that binds across the seas,” Muheria said, “We face many of the same challenges trying to be leaders. Our cultures are above place and background. They are cultures that create leadership for the world – Christian-imbued leadership, spiritual and human leadership.”

Clancy said that Saint Thomas Academy is already considering ways to share curriculum between the schools. Given water's scarcity and impurity in Kenya, environmental studies faculty are considering ways to teach the Kenyans about water quality monitoring, a task in which Academy students are well-versed. The school's PAGERS reading program may also cross cultures, with students reading and discussing books together via Skype.

“Our goal is to bring together these two distant schools to a point where each school is learning more from the other than we could ever learn from ourselves,” Clancy said. “The campus ministers aim to expose our classmates to life outside of our bubble, hopefully gaining a broader global perspective in the process.”

Archdiocese Partnership

In 2004, the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis and the Diocese of Kitui entered into a global solidarity partnership as a way to share faith, culture and resources. This partnership was initiated as a result of the U.S. Bishop's 2001 pastoral letter "A Call to Solidarity with Africa."

The schools' cooperative arrangement is a result of this partnership between the two diocese. Saint Thomas is the first high school to establish a partnership with a high school in Kitui; five Twin Cities elementary schools have partnered with Kitui schools in this first year of the school initiative.

"The schools can build this partnership however they'd like," said Deacon Mickey Friesen of the Center for Mission of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. "We have a vision of mutual exchange around shared life, shared curriculum, joint service and common faith. Beyond that, it's non-prescriptive. I'm excited by the ideas they're already discussing."

The Catholic Diocese of Kitui covers the four Administrative Districts of Kyuso, Mwingi, Kitui and Mutomo, an approximated arid and semi arid area of 30,142 Km" in Eastern province, Kenya, with a population of around 1.09 million people in the Diocese with over 240,000 baptized Catholics (*Source: *Central Statistics of the State; Secretariat of State; 2005*)

About Saint Thomas Academy

Founded in 1885, Saint Thomas Academy is an all-male, college preparatory, Catholic, military/leadership school committed to preparing young men to succeed in college and in life. Nationally accredited by the Independent Schools Association of the Central States (ISACS), the academy challenges young men to excel academically, spiritually, morally and physically in and out of the classroom.

###