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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Bishop Rino Fisichella of Rome to Speak
at Annual Msgr. William D. Steele Lecture**

HOUSTON (Dec. 20, 2007)—Bishop Rino Fisichella, Auxiliary Bishop of the Rome Archdiocese will deliver the 2008 Monsignor William D. Steele Lecture at 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 21, Nold Auditorium, at St. Mary's Seminary, 9845 Memorial Dr. He will discuss "Living as a Catholic in a Post-Modern Culture."

Bishop Fisichella is the rector of the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome, the international president of the Pope John Paul II Pontifical Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family, a former professor of fundamental theology at Gregorian University, and leads the Archdiocese of Rome's Commission for Ecumenism and Dialogue office. He has displayed a particular interest in strengthening relations with Rome's Jewish community.

He has published numerous articles and books in the field of Fundamental Theology and edited the prestigious Dictionary of Fundamental Theology with Fr. Rene Latourelle, S.J. His publications indicate his wide array of interests and his pastoral desire to be in dialogue with the modern world. Bishop Fisichella has had an especially positive influence in Western Europe through his dialogue with noted Church critic and professed atheist Orianna Fallaci. John L. Allen noted that at an annual meeting of the Catholic movement Communion and Liberation that one of the sessions was devoted to Fallaci and how she asked Bishop Fisichella to be at her side as she died. Allen wrote, "Their improbable friendship illustrates an important current percolating in contemporary Western culture, a budding détente between institutional Christianity and some of its sharpest Enlightenment-inspired critics, motivated by a deep sense of shared peril."

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The Steele Lecture is named in honor of the late Msgr. William D. Steele. Steele was born in Texarkana, Ark., on Aug. 31, 1929, but grew up in Port Arthur and attended Catholic schools there. He began his priestly studies in 1949 at St. Mary's Seminary, when it was located in La Porte, Texas. Steele was ordained in St. Mary's Cathedral in Galveston on May 26, 1956. His first assignment was at St. James School in Port Arthur, where he once was a student.

He then served the diocese in a number of locations and in varying capacities until 1982, when he took a seat on the formation faculty at St. Mary's Seminary, which he held until his death in 1984. Steele also wrote a popular column for The Texas Catholic Herald for many years. The Msgr. William D. Steele Lecture series began in 1986 to honor this great humanitarian, distinguished alumnus and faculty member of the seminary.

The Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston operates St. Mary's Seminary, which is the home for the University of St. Thomas' Graduate School of Theology. University of St. Thomas is a private institution committed to the liberal arts and to the religious, ethical and intellectual tradition of Catholic higher education.

