News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

University of St. Thomas to Host Fr. Robert Sirico "John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus* and the Renewal of Catholic Political Philosophy"

Houston (January 5, 2008) – Rev. Robert. A. Sirico, president of the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty, will speak about "John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus* and the Renewal of Catholic Political Philosophy." The lecture will be held at 7:30 p.m. on Feb. 12 in the Ahern Room, Crooker Center, 3909 Graustark. A reception will follow the talk.

John Paul II's *Centesimus Annus* (On the Hundredth year anniversary of Pope Leo XIII's encyclical on Human labor). Given, in 1991, on the 100th anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, two years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, but seven months before the end of the cold war and collapse of the Soviet Union, and just months after the first Gulf War, "CA is a seminal work," Dr. John Hittinger, UST professor of philosophy, said. "It stands as one of the best presentations of Catholic social teaching. The University of St Thomas is committed to the exploration of the Catholic intellectual tradition and this encyclical by this Pope is a fine way to become acquainted with it. Fr Sirico is a leading interpreter of the thought of Pope John Paul II."

Fr. Sirico will explore the idea of the free and virtuous society as enunciated by John Paul II. In such a society the truth revealed by faith and reason will be integrated. Fr. Sirico believes that such a society will foster a renewed appreciation for liberty, especially economic liberty. He will examine the implications of this vision for democracy in the 21st century.

Fr. Sirico received his Master of Divinity degree from the Catholic University of America. During his early ministry, he became concerned over the lack of training among religious studies students in fundamental economic principles. As a result of these concerns, he co-founded the Acton Institute with Kris Alan Mauren in 1990. Fr. Sirico holds an honorary doctorate in Christian ethics awarded by the Franciscan University of Steubenville, as well as an honorary doctorate in Social Sciences awarded by the Universidad Francisco Marroquin. He is currently the pastor of St. Mary Catholic Church in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

His writings have been widely published in the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Forbes*, and the *London Financial Times*. He is also sought as a commentator for CNN, ABC, the BBC, NPR, and CBS' 60 Minutes.

The lecture sponsored by the Office of Academic Affairs, the Center for Thomistic Studies and the Political Science Department. The Strake Foundation has generously funded this lecture.

For more information, contact Valerie Hall at 713- 525-2163.