News Release

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***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

# 'THE POPE AND ISLAM,' A PUBLIC FORUM PRESENTED BY UST'S ACADEMIC AFFAIRS OFFICE AND THOMISTIC STUDIES

HOUSTON (Sept. 29, 2006) — Dr. John Hittinger, vice president for Academic Affairs at the University of St. Thomas, will moderate a public forum discussing "The Pope and Islam" at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 4, in Cullen Hall, on the 4001 Mt. Vernon, on the St. Thomas campus. Academic Affairs and the Center for Thomistic Studies sponsor this forum.

On Sept. 12, 2006, Pope Benedict XVI delivered a lecture on "Faith, Reason, and the University" in Regensburg, Germany, quoting the critique of Islam by Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Paleologus (around 1391). Many Muslims around the world took exception to the Pope's words; and on Sept. 16, Cardinal Bertone, Vatican Secretary of State, said officially: "The Holy Father thus sincerely regrets that certain passages of his address could have sounded offensive to the sensitivities of the Muslim faithful, and should have been interpreted in a manner that in no way corresponds to his intentions." Among the issues the panelists will consider is: What did Pope Benedict say in Regensburg and was it an attack on the Islamic religion?

Dr. Javed Ashraf, Hugh Roy and Lillie Cullen professor of finance and economics at the Cameron School of Business, Fr. Daniel Callam, CSB, University chaplain and associate professor of theology and Dr. Ed Houser, a professor of philosophy in the Center for Thomistic Studies, comprise the panel.

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Dr. Ashraf, a native of Pakistan and a Muslim, has spoken extensively on Islamic topics. Fr. Callam, a priest in the Congregation of St. Basil, was educated at the University of Toronto and Oxford. A former editor of the *Chesterton Review*, Fr. Callam has spoken widely on many topics relating to Catholicism and its relationship to other religions. He is well known for his homilies and retreats. Dr. Houser, a specialist in ancient and Medieval philosophy, teaches Islamic philosophy and culture. He has spoken and written about the current War on Terror and how it involves Islam and the West.

Each speaker will have 10 minutes to present his views, and then the discussion will open to questions from the audience. This event is free and open to the public. Parking is available in Moran Center, West Alabama and Graustark, for $2. For more information, contact Pam Butler at 713-525-3591.

The UST Center for Thomistic Studies, the only graduate philosophy program in the United States focused on the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas, sponsors the lecture. The Center celebrates its 25th anniversary this year.

University of St. Thomas is a private institution committed educating leaders of faith and character and to the liberal arts and the religious, ethical and intellectual tradition of Catholic higher education.

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