News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NOSTRA AETATE: TRANSFORMATION, RECONCILIATION, MUTUAL RESPECT — ANNUAL STEELE LECTURE RETURNS

HOUSTON (Jan. 11, 2006) — Forty years ago, Vatican Council II issued an important document called *Nostra Aetate*, a declaration on the relationship of the Roman Catholic Church to non-Christian religions. A community-wide event at St. Mary's Seminary celebrates the impact of that document at 12:15 on Friday, Feb. 3. A complimentary light lunch will be served from 11:30 a.m. to noon. RSVP to Nita Sacco at 713-686-6844 ext. 482 by Jan. 25.

The keynote speaker of this annual Msgr. William D. Steele Lecture is Dr. Philip A. Cunningham, executive director of the Center for Christian Jewish Learning of Boston College.

Three prominent local clergymen will also participate: Galveston-Houston Archbishop Joseph Fiorenza, Rabbi Samuel E. Karff from Congregation Beth Israel, and the Rev. William A. Lawson of Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church.

Dr. Cunningham remains a leading authority on interfaith dialogue and has written extensively on topics of mutual concern to Christians and Jews; for example, the Passion of Christ and the Gospels from a Jewish and Christian perspective. He is a member of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Jewish-Christian Relations.

This program celebrates the Nostra Aetate. "The topic for this year is perfect for the Msgr. William Steele Lecture," said Fr. Brendan Cahill, rector, St. Mary's Seminary. "Msgr. Steele was especially devoted to the vision of the 'new and eternal Jerusalem' as one that guided him in his profound desire to build on the unity of humanity."

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40th Anniversary of Nostra Aetate/222222

The Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, the Anti-Defamation League, St. Mary's Seminary, Center for Faith & Culture of the University of St. Thomas and the Congregation Beth Yeshurun sponsor this event in cooperation with the American Jewish Committee, the Consulate General of Israel, and the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston's Community Relations Committee. Generous underwriting support of this event is provided by the Frankel Family Foundation.

People of all faiths are invited to attend.

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 Diocese 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.

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