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New Cost Data from U.S. Education Dept Highlights Importance of College Choice for Catholic Families

Citing new U.S. Department of Education data on the nation's most expensive colleges, The Cardinal Newman Society (CNS) is urging Catholic families to consider the true value of higher education and to choose faithfully Catholic colleges.

"In a bad economy, Catholic families have to be particularly conscious of where their money is going," said CNS President Patrick J. Reilly. "A Catholic college is the best choice for nurturing a student's Catholic faith and preparing ethical, intelligent leaders to rise above our increasingly secular culture. But a Catholic education is only worth the price if it is faithfully Catholic."

Last week **CNN Money** reported data from the U.S. Department of Education's **College Affordability and Transparency Center**, identifying four Catholic universities among America's ten most expensive large colleges: Santa Clara University (\$35,245), Saint Joseph's University (\$34,548), Fordham University (\$31,916) and the main campus of Saint Louis University (\$31,255). Net cost is calculated as tuition, room and board, and book fees in 2008-09 for full-time beginning students, minus institutional and government aid. The ranking is for U.S. colleges (excluding Puerto Rico) with undergraduate enrollments of at least 5,000 students.

Among the largest Catholic colleges, seven of the ten most expensive are Jesuit, including the four mentioned by **CNN Money** and **Loyola Marymount University** (\$29,497), **Loyola University Chicago** (\$27,955) and **Georgetown University** (\$26,631). The others are the **University of San Diego** (\$30,044), **Villanova University** (\$27,115) and the **University of St. Thomas in Minnesota** (\$26,679).

But Catholic families have other options, often at lower cost and with strong commitment to providing a solid Catholic education. The Cardinal Newman Society profiles colleges that model a strong Catholic identity in *The Newman Guide to Choosing a Catholic College*, available in print and also online (free of charge) at www.TheNewmanGuide.com.

According to the U.S. Education Department, the median net cost in 2008-09 for colleges in *The Newman Guide* was \$20,189—more than \$5,000 less than the median for large Catholic universities. Most of *The Newman Guide* colleges lack the large endowments of large universities, but they provide substantial student aid and strive to keep costs competitive. They also typically have small class sizes, strong liberal arts curricula, and a sincere commitment to authentic Catholic teaching.

In a 2009 study released by CNS, "**College Affordability and Catholic Identity**," economist Andrew Gillen found that students at *Newman Guide* colleges graduate with fewer loans and less debt—on average, about \$2,000 less than at all private colleges and \$1,400 less than at other Catholic colleges.

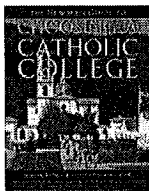
"About one in six Catholic students leaves the faith before graduation from an American college," Reilly said. "What diploma is worth that? But thankfully Catholic families can find colleges that help students grow in the faith and offer great value for the cost."

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"...a public conscience for Catholic higher education,"
Father Matthew Lamb,
Ave Maria University

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