FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement from Sister Mary Sarah Galbraith, President of Aquinas College

NASHVILLE, TN (April 4, 2014) - The events around the recent talk by Sister Jane Dominic Laurel, O.P. in Charlotte, NC have produced a great deal of speculation from many sides. Among the commentators, there are few who were actually present to hear the talk, which was not recorded.

It is the firm belief of Aquinas College that all men and women are created in God’s image and likeness and are made with a capacity to love and be loved. The College supports the Catholic Church’s teachings which are open to the diverse needs and desires of all, which must be considered in light of eternal truths.

We support and affirm that every man and woman, regardless of his or her state in life, deserves respect, and that the health of any culture is gauged according to the capacity of its members to uphold their own beliefs while respecting the beliefs of others. The College’s patron, St. Thomas Aquinas, was known for his ability to thoughtfully consider all things and retain what is true, regardless of the source of that truth.

We believe it is our privilege to bring the best aspects of our faith tradition to bear on the moral and cultural questions of the present age. In her presentation, Sister Jane Dominic spoke clearly on matters of faith and morals. Her deviation into realms of sociology and anthropology was beyond the scope of her expertise. Sister is a trained theologian from a Pontifical University and has the credentials to contribute to scholarly bodies of work. This she has done in the past with distinction. The unfortunate events at Charlotte Catholic High School are not representative of the quality of Sister’s academic contributions or the positive influence that she has had on her students. The students at Charlotte Catholic were unprepared, as were their parents, for the topic that Sister was asked to deliver. The consequence was a complete misrepresentation of the school’s intention to bring a message that would enlighten and bring freedom and peace.

There are no words that are able to reverse the harm that has been caused by these comments. The community of Aquinas College is saddened by this extreme outcome and wishes to reiterate that this is not something the College condones or desires to create. There is division where there should be unity. The events and discussions that have transpired over the last two weeks reflect that there is something in this that surpasses an ordinary high school assembly.

Sister Jane Dominic has cancelled her speaking engagements and, at her request, is preparing to begin a sabbatical from teaching at Aquinas College. It is our sincere hope that the community of Charlotte Catholic High School will soon begin a process of healing and renewal, and that all who have been affected by this event will be drawn into profound reconciliation as we approach this great season that commemorates the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

ABOUT AQUINAS COLLEGE: Through a rigorous undergraduate and graduate curricula that emphasize the dignity of the human person, Aquinas College fosters the intellectual, moral, and professional development of students while preparing them for careers in the professions of education, nursing, and business. Faculty and students engage in a proactive teaching-advising partnership that enables students to cultivate rich interpersonal relationships in a Christ-centered, family-like environment. Personalized instruction in small classes ensures that each student achieves his or her full academic and personal potential. Founded in 1961 by the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia Congregation, Aquinas College is located on a scenic 83-acre campus in the heart of Nashville and is the only four-year Catholic liberal arts college in middle and east Tennessee. For additional information, please visit www.aquinascollege.edu.

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