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**Archdiocese of Los Angeles to Expand Co-Educational Catholic High School
Options in Downey Area**

Beginning with the 2013-14 academic year, a Catholic high school campus in South Los Angeles County will again open its doors to a co-educational student body. The 19-acre Downey school that was previously home to the co-ed Pius X High School from 1953-95, and is now the site of the all-girls St. Matthias High School, will open in September 2013 as the co-ed **St. Pius X – St. Matthias Academy**.

Announcing the change, Archbishop Jose Gomez of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles said, "Education remains essential to our Church's mission. Catholic schools have given generations of student's excellent opportunities through education, and a chance to become leaders in our civic and cultural life."

Monsignor Sal Pilato, Superintendent of High Schools for the Archdiocese, said the change will help to ensure that students throughout the Archdiocese have access to Catholic education at all grade levels. "In the city of Downey and the surrounding communities, the school communities of Pius X High School and the current St. Matthias High School have been an important part of serving this mission and have served it well. Communities and their needs change over time, and schools must respond to those needs in order to remain responsive. We are pleased that so many members of the community were part of the planning process that resulted in a new school and a vibrant future for a campus that launched many Catholic lives over the past 60 years."

Last Spring, Loyola Marymount University's Center for Catholic Education was asked by the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and the St. Matthias High School Board to conduct a study on the current St. Matthias High School and present recommendations for the future of the Downey campus. The study solicited participation from parents, staff, students, board members, as well as various members of the local community including neighboring parish churches, Catholic elementary and secondary schools, and alumni of both the former Pius X High School and St. Matthias High School.

The transition is being led by a volunteer transition committee chaired by John H. Smet. In spring 2012, the administrative team was reconfigured to lead St. Matthias and the new **St. Pius X – St. Matthias Academy** through the transition: Erick Rubalcava, Principal; Veronica Zozoya, Vice Principal; and Keani Romero, Director of Marketing and Outreach. All three have been administrators at St. Matthias for three or more years. Said Rubalcava, "It's really a privilege to work with the Archdiocese, the school's board, administration and faculty to create a new school and a new future from a long tradition of education and service. Together, we remain deeply committed to bringing the gospel message of hope to youth in this community through faith and a quality Catholic education."

The name **St. Pius X – St. Matthias Academy** was selected to honor the traditions of both school communities that have been associated with the campus and served the community since 1953.

Community members and students will be encouraged to participate in building and pioneering new traditions for the future of the school. The school will begin taking applications from both boys and girls next month, and will welcome both boys and girls to the 9th grade class beginning in fall 2013.

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For more information please visit: www.stmatthiashs.org and www.piusmatthias.org
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