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Christ the King Jesuit College Prep Opening on Chicago's West Side Chicago's Second Cristo Rey Model School Welcomes Its First Class This August

Christ the King Jesuit College Preparatory School, the first Catholic school to be built on Chicago's West Side in 85 years, welcomes its first class of 120 students this August. With the opening of Christ the King, the Archdiocese of Chicago will see an increase in the total number of Catholic schools for the first time in 42 years.

The Austin neighborhood where the school is located has more than 14,000 high school age youth, but only 7,000 seats available at nearby schools, and no other Catholic high schools in the area. With Christ the King, the Archdiocese of Chicago and the Chicago Province of the Society of Jesus (The Jesuits) are offering a new alternative to the West Side community: a safe, faith-based, college-prep education following the highly successful Cristo Rey Network model. Rooted in the centuries-old Jesuit education tradition of academic excellence and leadership development, Christ the King makes possible the dream of a high-quality, affordable education for students who would not otherwise have access to a private Catholic high school.

Groundbreaking for construction of the school's permanent building at 5058 W. Jackson Blvd. takes place on Thursday, June 26 with Cardinal Francis George, OMI, and Mayor Richard M. Daley expected to attend.

"Christ the King is an example of Catholic education's commitment to serving wherever the need is greatest," said Cardinal George. "It's a proud moment for the Archdiocese, as Christ the King is built upon ground that has long served Catholic education and the Gospel of Jesus Christ on the West Side of Chicago, through Resurrection, later St. Martin de Porres, and now Christ the King schools."

"Christ the King is a wonderful example of what happens when a community works together, motivated by the desire to create opportunities for its children," said Mayor Daley. "I commend the West Side community leaders and educators in the area who have supported Christ the King from the beginning. I also commend the Jesuits for responding to the concerns of parents and community residents who will be served by this school."

The new building's unique open design, by award-winning architect John Ronan, conveys the school's mission of bringing hope to the community. "We are constructing not just a building, but with God's grace, are creating a beacon of light and hope—a place where our young people will become tomorrow's leaders; leaders who not only better themselves, but commit to serve and lift up their community," said Rev. Christopher J. Devron, SJ, president of Christ the King. "Using the gifts that God gives us, let us work to make those plans and dreams come true. Our future depends on it!"



The new campus will open in 2009. In the meantime, Christ the King's Class of 2012 will start this August in a temporary location at St. Martin de Porres School on Washington Blvd. and LeClaire Ave. The school will add one class each year for a total of 600 students in grades 9-12.

Christ the King is a collaborative effort with parents, families and the West Side community. A feasibility study conducted at the community's request showed overwhelming support for a faith-based school, even though the majority of parents and students surveyed are not Catholic.

The Cristo Rey model is an innovative partnership between urban education and the business community. Christ the King will collaborate with 30 Chicago-area corporations who will sponsor internships for all 120 students in the freshman class. These internships allow the students to earn about 75 percent of their tuition costs while gaining valuable skills and experience.

Cristo Rey schools also feature a longer school day and year, and an expectation that every student could go to college. In fact, 97.8% of all Cristo Rey graduates attend a college or university.

Chicago is the birthplace of the Cristo Rey model. The first, Cristo Rey Jesuit High School, opened in Pilsen twelve years ago and sparked a national movement. Today, Christ the King Jesuit College Prep is the twentieth Cristo Rey model school in the nation. "The city that works" has embraced a new model of education that works.

About Christ the King Jesuit College Preparatory School

Christ the King Jesuit College Preparatory School is a Catholic Jesuit, independent, coeducational, college preparatory school for students from families on Chicago's West Side who would otherwise not have access to a private high school education. Sponsored by the Chicago Province Jesuits, Christ the King offers students a strong academic and spiritual foundation integrated with a Corporate Internship Program in a safe, disciplined, faith-based and nurturing environment. To learn more about Christ the King Jesuit Prep, please visit www.ckjesuit.org.

About Chicago Province of the Society of Jesus

The Chicago Province of the Society of Jesus consists of 219 Jesuits serving in a number of ministries including two parishes, two retreat centers, a publishing house, six high schools, two universities, and one Nativity-model middle school. Chicago area ministries include Chicago Jesuit Academy, Cristo Rey Jesuit High School, Loyola Academy, St. Ignatius College Prep, Loyola University Chicago, Loyola University Medical Center, Bellarmine Jesuit Retreat House, Charis Ministries, Cook County Hospital Chaplains, and St. Procopius Parish. The Jesuits are the world's largest order of Catholic priests. To learn more about the Chicago Province, please visit www.jesuits-chi.org.

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