

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Subject: 2009 School of Ministry Distinguished  
Alumni Awards

The University of Dallas School of Ministry will present its annual Distinguished Alumni Awards on Saturday, December 5, 2009. The recipients are Reyna Castelán and Michele Elchlepp. Ms. Castelán works with inmates at a federal prison while Ms. Elchlepp teaches college bound students at a highly regarded prep school. Their students may not appear to have a lot in common, but they all share in the privilege of learning from dedicated and skilled teachers who love both their subject and their students.

Castelán, a volunteer Bible study leader at the Federal Correctional Institution in Fort Worth for over ten years, is the recipient of the 2009 *Dei Verbum* Award for Distinguished Alumni of the Catholic Biblical School (CBS), a four year intensive study of the Bible that is part of the School of Ministry at the University of Dallas. The award recognizes outstanding service to the Church, especially in its educational mission, and to the larger community beyond.

Ms. Castelán had been helping out at the federal prison on Fort Worth's south side for several years when she began studies in the Catholic Biblical School. That experience opened up the riches of the bible in a new way. "The classes gave me more than just information about the Bible," Ms. Castelán said. "They helped me know at a new level that God loves us, no matter what. The teachers' love for the Scriptures inspired me to share that deep truth with my brothers in prison." After graduation, she arranged with professors at the CBS to lead a small group of Spanish speaking inmates through the comprehensive curriculum.

A long time volunteer for Tarrant County Aids Outreach Center and an ardent supporter of the work of Catholic Charities, Ms. Castelán is also an associate of the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur. She has been employed by the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth for over 20 years, where she serves as secretary to Bishop Kevin Vann.

Michele Elchlepp receives the 2009 *Lumen Gentium* Award for Distinguished Alumni, given by the School of Ministry to honor an outstanding alumnus of its graduate programs.

Elchlepp chairs the Theology Department at Jesuit College Preparatory School, where she has taught since 1994. She has been recognized for excellence in teaching and served in leadership positions of the Jesuit Secondary Education Association, a national coalition of educators serving schools staffed by the Society of Jesus (Jesuits).

Described by colleagues as "indefatigable," Ms. Elchlepp's effort, while always centered on her students, extends to faculty development, curriculum design, and an innovative program of

volunteer service for Jesuit alumni. A graduate of Ursuline Academy, she serves the larger community through participation in a variety of charitable and civic organizations.

Ms. Elchlepp called her studies at the School of Ministry (formerly the Institute for Religious and Pastoral Studies) “a touchstone” in her work with students. “That knowledge has given me a base which I use while interacting with my students as part of the formation of their knowledge and the development of their personal relationship with God.”

Both the *Dei Verbum* and *Lumen Gentium* awards, named after key documents of the Second Vatican Council, will be presented at the 11<sup>th</sup> annual Landregan Lecture on Saturday, December 5, 2009, at 7:30 PM at the University of Dallas in Irving. Visit the School of Ministry website (<http://www.udallas.edu/academics/ministry/somevents/landregan>) or call Oscar Carranza at 972/721-5105 for more information on the lecture.

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### **About the School of Ministry**

The University of Dallas School of Ministry is one of the fastest-growing graduate schools in its field in the United States. The School's five master's degree programs has increased from 26 students in 2002 to 130 students in 2007. Enrollment in its Catholic Biblical School certificate program has increased from 70 students in 2002 to more than 620 in 2007, making it the largest program of its kind among all Catholic universities in the United States, based on 2007 enrollment numbers. Additionally, more than 130 students are enrolled in its deacon and faith formation programs. Enrollment in all School of Ministry programs is projected to double to more than 1,600 in the next four years.

For more information about the School of Ministry, go to [www.udallas.edu/ministry](http://www.udallas.edu/ministry).

### **About the University of Dallas**

The University of Dallas is a Catholic, co-educational, liberal arts university with more than 3,000 students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate programs through the Constantin College of Liberal Arts, the College of Business, the Graduate School of Management, the Braniff Graduate School of Liberal Arts, and the School of Ministry.

UD is the youngest university in the 20th century to be granted a Phi Beta Kappa chapter and 16 students have received Fulbright awards since 1994. The fall 2007 freshman class is the largest in the University's history; the MBA program is the largest in the southwestern United States, based on the number of students enrolled; Braniff offers the only Ph.D. program in the United States with a core curriculum in the great books; and the School of Ministry is the fastest growing graduate school in its field in the United States.

The University of Dallas has its main campus in Irving, Texas, an international campus near Rome, Italy, and satellite campuses in North Richland Hills and Frisco, Texas.

For more information about the University of Dallas, go to [www.udallas.edu](http://www.udallas.edu).

