



# DIOCESE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE & COVERAGE

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### **Bishop Felipe Estévez Blesses and Dedicates New Morning Star High School**

Jacksonville, Fla. – Bishop Felipe Estévez of the Diocese of St. Augustine will bless and dedicate the newly completed wing of Morning Star School on Friday, August 18, at 10:00 a.m. The school is located in the Arlington area of Jacksonville at 725 Mickler Road.

The \$1.5 million construction project adds four classrooms each for the middle school and new high school and a media technology center.

Founded in 1956 by Archbishop Joseph P. Hurley (sixth bishop of the diocese serving from 1940-1967), Morning Star School serves students who have a diagnosed learning disability, attention deficit disorders, high-functioning autism and mild intellectual disorders. The school has a unique model – a 12:1 student-teacher ratio and individualized education. And while Morning Star is a Catholic school, 90 percent of its students are non-Catholic.

For families with teens entering high school, the new addition to Morning Star School is critically needed. There is only one other school in Jacksonville offering students in high school grades specialized education.

“There are few special education high schools in our city,” said Jean Barnes, principal of the school. “This is a long awaited moment for the school, and for parents who have few options for their children with learning disabilities.”

Morning Star also has a mentoring partnership with Bishop John Snyder High School. Morning Star students are invited to participate in Bishop Snyder pep rallies, Homecoming, and other events. And Morning Star’s seniors will join the graduation ceremony at Bishop Snyder.

As part of the capital campaign, the Morning Star Circle of Friends was formed to help the philanthropic community learn more about the school. The honorary chairs, Bob Shircliff, Jay Demetree and Lou Walsh, helped raise funds for the new high school wing.

Special donors have named the new wing of the school in honor of Archbishop Joseph P. Hurley.

“What an amazing and joyous occasion for everyone who has worked so hard to conceptualize and shape what was once just a dream,” said Barnes. “Our success in adding a Morning Star high school program is inspiring and critically needed – an exciting milestone in our 60-year history of teaching children with disabilities,” she added.

For more details about the school and dedication ceremony, call Jean Barnes or Maria Johnson, director of development at (904) 962-5080.

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