

## St. Junipero Serra School to Break Ground on New Chapel and Student Creation Center

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*The 22,000-sq.-ft. project will complete a nearly \$30 million, 15 year Master Development plan for the largest Catholic Elementary school on the West Coast* **Garden Grove, Calif., (March 31, 2017)** – The Most Rev. Kevin Vann, Bishop of Orange and school officials will join students and parents at St. Junipero Serra Catholic School in Rancho Santa Margarita for a ceremonial ground breaking for the new Saint Serra Chapel and a two-story Student Creation Center/Admin building on April 3, 2017 at 10 a.m. When completed in mid-2018, this ambitious project will mark the successful completion of the Master Development Plan for Saint Junipero Serra Catholic School that has included four distinct phases and spanned nearly 15 years. Since opening its doors in 1995, St. Serra School has grown to more than 1,000 students and has been recognized by U.S. Department of Education as a Blue Ribbon School. “I am blessed to join with the St. Serra School family in beginning perhaps the most important building project in their history, the establishment of a chapel. As our Catholic schools faith is central and this new chapel will enable students to praise our Lord in a beautiful setting at the heart of their campus,” said Bishop Vann. “This project also demonstrates the incredible vibrancy and growth of our Diocese and its educational system. We are pleased to continue to invest in the future of our Church and community.” Phase one of this massive upgrade was completed in 2004 and included a 48,000 sq. ft. Primary Education Building. The second phase of this project included the two-story three winged classroom building and Student Activity Center that opened Sep. 6, 2009. The Activity Center is used to host student athletics and physical education as well as serve as a gathering place for the 650 families and approximately 1,000 students Serra serves. The final phase of this campus project includes the St. Serra chapel, the cornerstone of the campus and a two-story building that will house the “*Student Creation Center*”, educational space that is committed to STEM education, collaborative learning and the Arts on the lower floors, as well as administrative offices and a volunteer parent hub on the second floor. This 22,000 sq. ft. project is currently projected to cost \$9 million and open in the fall of 2018. “The seminal project for our campus solidifies our commitment to creating future leaders for our community through a commitment to STEM education and the Arts. Also, the addition of a central Chapel will keep our academic community firmly rooted in our Catholic faith and support the spiritual formation of our students,” said Angeline Trudell, president of St. Serra School.

**HISTORY OF SERRA CATHOLIC SCHOOL:** In 1993, a group of concerned parents approached their Pastors about the feasibility of establishing a Catholic elementary school for their children. Although the Diocese had no plans in place to expand the school system in the Diocese of Orange, the parents assumed the responsibility of working closely with the Diocesan Schools’ Office to found the county’s first and only tri-parish elementary school. Today, Serra serves the parishes of St. Kilian (Mission Viejo), San Francisco Solano (Rancho Santa Margarita), Santiago de Compostela (Lake Forest) and Holy Trinity (Ladera Ranch). The school, which was the first new Catholic elementary school in Orange County in 15 years, opened in the fall of 1995. When Serra opened, it had 10 classrooms accommodating a total enrollment of approximately 250 students in Grades Kindergarten through Sixth. Today, St. Serra educates over 1,000 students from Preschool through Eighth Grade. St. Serra, built on a foundation deeply rooted in Gospel values and Catholic faith and tradition, represents a faith community centered in prayer, modeling for students and one another what it means to be a follower of Jesus. Pastoral Center: Communications Department 13280 Chapman Avenue Garden Grove, CA 92840 **office:** 714-282-3075 **fax:** 714-282-302

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