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**U.S. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION BETSY DeVOS TO ADDRESS GRADUATES  
AT 2018 AVE MARIA UNIVERSITY COMMENCEMENT**

**AVE MARIA, Fla. (January 11, 2018)** — Ave Maria University announced today that the Honorable Betsy DeVos, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, will be commencement speaker at this year’s graduation exercises.

“It is a great privilege to have America’s top education official address the Class of 2018, and our entire campus community looks forward to welcoming her with joy in May,” said Jim Towey, president of Ave Maria University. “Secretary DeVos is a passionate advocate for children in America and their right to a quality education, and the common-sense initiatives she has undertaken in her first year overseeing higher education in America merit our gratitude,” he added. President of the AMU Student Government Association, Stephen Akers, echoed Towey’s enthusiasm. “Having Secretary DeVos on our campus is a true honor for our graduates and Ave Maria’s students will receive her with all of the excitement and gratitude she so richly deserves,” he commented.

Chairman of the Ave Maria University Board of Trustees Michael Timmis believes Secretary DeVos’ choice of the University buttresses the campus’ growing national profile, and praised her selection. “Secretary DeVos recognizes the rights and importance of faith-based institutions of

higher education in America,” he stated. “Her message will surely resonate with our graduates on their special day.”

Ave Maria University’s commencement takes place on May 5, 2018 at 10AM in the Tom Golisano Field House. Approximately 250 undergraduate and graduate students are expected to receive degrees at this year’s ceremony, the 11th on the University’s permanent campus, and 14<sup>th</sup> overall. Past commencement speakers have included former Florida Governor Jeb Bush; entrepreneur Dan D’Aniello; Florida Governor Rick Scott; *The Wall Street Journal* columnist and author Peggy Noonan; Librarian of Congress Dr. James Billington; President of the American Enterprise Institute Dr. Arthur Brooks; and His Eminence Sean Cardinal O’Malley, Archbishop of Boston.

Ave Maria University is a Catholic liberal arts college situated in Southwest Florida with approximately 1,100 students from 45 states and 24 countries, and offers concentrations of study in 34 majors as well as both a Master and Doctoral program in theology. AMU’s average class size of 20, 85% Ph.D. instruction, net out-of-pocket costs for tuition, fees, room and board of about \$20,000, and low average student debt for graduates, make the University one of the best value propositions in all of academia. Recently ranked as one of the top 25 colleges in the South and the third best in Florida by the Washington, D.C.-based research firm WalletHub.com, Ave Maria University has the nation’s only Mother Teresa of Calcutta project and museum in her honor. This academic year scores of AMU students will travel on mission trips to India, Uganda, Haiti, Mexico, France and the Dominican Republic, as well as serve the poor in the nearby farmworker community of Immokalee.

For more information on Ave Maria University, visit <https://www.avemaria.edu>.

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