



Bishop Vann Announces Papal Honors to 16 Outstanding Members of the Diocese

Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth Bishop Kevin W. Vann Monday announced well-deserved honors bestowed by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI to 16 distinguished members of the Diocese. The honors were announced during a special luncheon ceremony at the Catholic Center.

The Papal honors will be conferred by Bishop Vann during Vesper Services with Conferral of Pontifical Honors on Tuesday, December 13 at St. Patrick Cathedral.

“The Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth is blessed to have many men and women who are dedicated to their Catholic faith, to their communities and to their families,” Bishop Vann said. “Because of their exemplary apostolic work and ministry, Pope Benedict has conferred these long-standing honors to members of our Diocese. These individuals are tireless workers in the vineyard of the local Church who live out their Catholic faith, and, as St. Paul says in Thessalonians, “work quietly.”

The Papal honors announced by Bishop Vann have been the practice of the Holy See for many years and are among some of the important recognitions that can be conferred upon laity and Religious. Bishop Vann hopes to be able to have another series of these recognitions in the future.

Those receiving the various Papal honors are:

The Pontifical Equestrian Order of St. Gregory the Great:

Patricia and Arthur Dickerson, St. Patrick Cathedral, Fort Worth

The Pro-Ecclesia et Pontifice Cross:

Sister M. Devota Sweeney, SSMN, Our Lady of Victory Center, Fort Worth

Brother Al Kuntemeier, SM, Nolan Catholic High School, Fort Worth

Brother Paul McMullen, TOR, formerly with St. Bartholomew Catholic Church, Fort Worth

Sister Juliana Tran, CSFN, formally of Vietnamese Martyrs Church, Arlington now in Philadelphia

The Benemerenti Medal:

Michael D. Barks, Our Mother of Mercy Catholic School, Fort Worth

Peter M. Flynn, Diocesan Vice Chancellor for Administrative Services and Finance Director

Guadalupe (Lupe) and Emilio (Popo) Gonzalez, Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, Denton

Lucas R. Pollice, Diocesan Director of Catechesis

Heather Reynolds, Director of Fort Worth Catholic Charities, Inc.

Jean Riley, Diocesan Representative for the Disabled

Ann R. Healey, Retired Director of the Diocesan Permanent Diaconate Formation
Daniel Shine, Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Church, Wichita Falls
Ann Louise Smith, Diocesan Campus and Hospital Ministries

The Pontifical Equestrian Order of St. Gregory the Great was established in 1831 by Pope Gregory XVI and is bestowed on men and women in recognition of services to the Holy See and the Church, unusual laborers and the good example set in their community and country.

Patricia and Arthur Dickerson

Pat and Art Dickerson are receiving the St. Gregory Award for their well-known, legendary and appreciated commitment to faith, the Diocese and St. Patrick Cathedral. The Dickersons continue to be actively involved in various aspects of the Diocese and St. Patrick. Art is involved in a range of St. Patrick parish life, including overseeing renovation of the Cathedral and the construction of the pastoral center. Pat also is deeply involved at St. Patrick's. She is a member of the Catholic Daughters, the Altar Society and works to promote St. Patrick devotional life.

The Pro-Ecclesia et Pontifice Cross was established in 1888 by Pope Leo XIII and has evolved to recognize distinguished service to the Church by laity and clergy and is the highest award to laity by the Papacy.

Sister M. Devota Sweeney, SSMN

Sister M. Devota, a Wichita Falls native, is recognized for a lifetime of work as a member of the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur serving as a school principal in the Diocese as well as in England. She also served as the order's provincial superior and the order's General Council in Belgium. At 90-years-old, Sister M. Devota is at Our Lady of Victory Center in Fort Worth. Most recently, she was missioned at Notre Dame High School in Wichita Falls.

Brother Al Kuntemeier, SM

Brother Al is recognized for his service to Nolan Catholic High School where he has been a faculty member for the last 30 years. Brother Al has served as a role model and touched the lives of thousands of students as a guidance and academic counselor while living out his faith during his 60 years as a religious.

Brother Paul McMullen, TOR

Brother McMullen is recognized for his respected work throughout the Diocese particularly for his recent service as the pastoral administrator of St. Bartholomew Catholic Church, his work on various diocesan boards and Sacramental assignments and his work with the Franciscan Friars of the Third Order Regular of Saint Francis in the Diocese and as well nationally and internationally. He was a staff minister at St. John Parish in North Richland Hills and served as the vocations director for his province as well as a member of the General Curia staff of the TOR at SS. Cosmas and Damian Church in Rome. He also was parish administrator at St. George Parish.

Sister Juliana Tran, CSFN

Sister Juiliana is recognized for her dedicated work with the diocesan Vietnamese community, from working in the catechetical area in the largest Vietnamese church in the Diocese, Vietnamese Martyrs, to assisting the diocesan Tribunal Office. Sister Juliana is well-respected in her religious community whose faith is exemplary. Sister Juliana is currently in graduate school in Philadelphia.

The Benemerenti Medal was created by Pope Pius VI in the late 1700s. In 1832 Pope Gregory XVI instituted the medal to recognize individuals who have exhibited long and exceptional service to the Catholic Church, their families and community. In 1925, the medal was expanded to recognize persons in service of the Church from both civil and military as well as the laity and the clergy.

Michael D. Barks

Barks is recognized for his work as a member of the Our Mother of Mercy School advisory council. Barks not only is a strong proponent of Catholic education to help African-American students to overcome barriers and to advance in life but he also was instrumental in the construction of a new school. Barks lives out his faith by also serving as a role model for young African-American men as an instructor and mentor for Junior Knights of St. Peter Claver, as a JROTC instructor and through his many parish works. Barks and his wife Marie are members of Our Mother of Mercy Parish.

Peter M. Flynn

Flynn is recognized for 26 years of dedicated work to the Diocese and to Bishops Joseph Delaney and Vann. Flynn began as director of stewardship and development and now is vice chancellor for administrative services and finance director which requires him to be deeply involved in all aspects of one of the fastest growing dioceses in the United States. Flynn is deeply committed to his faith and his family. Flynn and his wife Shirley are members of St. Bartholomew Parish.

Guadalupe (Lupe) and Emilio (Popo) Gonzalez

The Gonzalezes are recognized for being “bridge builders” between Hispanic and Anglo communities at their parish, Immaculate Conception of Denton, as well as mentors to newly arriving seminarians from Mexico. The Gonzalezes live out their faith as well as their commitment to family by welcoming immigrants to the parish and community. Popo is a diocesan permanent deacon while Lupe is on staff at Immaculate Conception.

Lucas Pollice

Pollice is recognized for dedicated work as director of the diocesan Catechesis Department to ground the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth’s catechetical and formation programs strongly in foundational pastoral and Catholic teaching and ensuring that the tenets of the Catholic faith reach the faithful while maintaining a deep commitment to his family and community. He has been very much involved in the planning of the University of Dallas Ministry Conference which is jointly sponsored by the Catholic Dioceses of Fort Worth and Dallas. Pollice and his wife Mary and their family are members of St. Maria Goretti Parish.

Heather Reynolds

Reynolds is recognized for bringing Catholic Charities of Fort Worth, Inc. into closer concert with the Diocese by preserving the Catholic identity of both the board and staff while reaching out to all in need in the Diocese’s geographical area regardless of religious affiliation. At the age of 31, Reynolds also is recognized for spearheading a \$16 million capital campaign to relocate and construct a new Catholic Charities center. Heather and her husband John are members of Holy Family Parish.

Jean Riley

Riley is recognized for her tireless work as the diocesan representative for persons with special needs. Wheelchair-bound herself, Riley is a respected advocate for the disabled both with the Church and the local Fort Worth community who demonstrates her commitment to her faith through religious painting and her parish life. Riley is a member of St. Rita Parish.

Ann Ruston Healey

Healey is recognized for her dedicated and relentless work to first form the diocesan Permanent Diaconate Formation program and directed the program for 26 years before retiring. Her tenure and her life are marked by her dedication, pastoral skills and loyalty to the Church. Healey is a member of St. Andrew’s Parish.

Daniel Shine

Shine is recognized for 50 years of dedicated services to Our Lady of Queen Peace Parish and to the Diocese in an array of areas, from chairing the parish building committee that guided construction of its new church, to serving on the diocesan capital campaign committee and various diocesan boards and projects. Shine demonstrates his deep faith by serving as an Extra-Ordinary Minister of Holy Communion and, as a Knight of Columbus and, leading the annual diocesan benefit for the diocesan seminary bursar, as well as other services. Shine and his wife Sue are members of Our Lady of Queen Peace Parish.

Ann Louise Smith

Smith is recognized for dedicated pastoral work with young people and college students as a campus minister both in Fort Worth and Wichita Falls as well using her nursing and pastoral skills to serve children and those in hospitals. As an Oblate of the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur, Smith has continually demonstrated her great faith, care and love for all persons to whom she ministers and particularly the members of her community. She is also on the diocesan Conduct Review Board. Smith is a member of the TCU Catholic community.

The Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth was established on August 9, 1969 by Pope Paul VI. Bishop John Cassata served as the first Bishop of the Diocese. Bishop Joseph Delaney was the second Bishop, serving from September 13, 1981 until his death on July 12, 2005. Bishop Vann was installed the third Bishop of the Diocese on July 13, 2005. The Diocese today consists of 90 parishes and approximately 710,000 Catholics in the 28 counties of North Texas that make up the Diocese.

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