



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Papal Honors to be Bestowed on Eight Individuals

~ Honorees include Former Mayor Joe Riley and Retired S.C. Chief Justice Jean Toal ~

The Most Reverend Robert E. Guglielmo, Bishop of Charleston, announces that Papal Honors will be imparted on eight people on Sunday, Jan. 15 at a Vesper Service. These honors come directly from Pope Francis and are given to individuals as recognition for them living out their Catholic faith in service to the Church and the wider community.

The Holy Father has bestowed the following honors:

Order of St. Gregory

- Knight of St. Gregory - The Honorable Joseph P. Riley Jr, former Mayor of the City of Charleston
- Dame of St. Gregory - The Honorable Jean Hoefer Toal, Chief Justice of the South Carolina Supreme Court (Retired)

Chaplain of His Holiness

- Reverend James Le Blanc, pastor of St. Andrew's Parish and vicar for Family Life, with the title of Reverend Monsignor

The Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice Cross

- Reverend Nicholas Capetola, CRM, retired pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish, Goose Creek
- Reverend Frank Palmieri, CRM, pastor of St. Anne-St. Jude Parish in Sumter
- Sister Pamela Smith, SS.C.M., Diocesan Secretary for Education
- Deacon Andre' Guillet, Diocesan Director of the Diaconate

Benemerenti Medal

- Mrs. Kathy Schmutz - Diocesan Director of the Office of Family Life

Bishop Guglielmo said Mr. Riley and Judge Toal are receiving the honor because of their contributions to the community. "Their numerous years of public service have played a positive role in the evolution of our state. Both have been instrumental in inspiring and leading the residents of South Carolina."

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Bishop Guglielmone added that the other six individuals are being recognized due to their commitment to the Diocese of Charleston. “These men and women work tirelessly to improve various programs within the Catholic community. Their service, leadership and enthusiasm are worthy of this high honor from the Holy Father.”

The Vesper Service begins at 3:00 p.m. in the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, 120 Broad Street. Members of the media are invited to cover the service.

About the Diocese of Charleston

The Catholic Diocese of Charleston comprises the entire state of South Carolina with Charleston as its See city. Founded in 1820 by Pope Pius VII, it is one of the oldest Catholic dioceses in the United States.

About the Order of St. Gregory

The Order of St. Gregory the Great is among the five papal Orders of Knighthood. The order seeks to bestow honor and recognition upon Roman Catholics who have rendered excellent service and support to the Holy See to the Catholic Church and to the community.

About the Chaplain of His Holiness

Chaplain to His Holiness is an honor bestowed upon a diocesan priest for exceptional service to the Church. The priest is now addressed as Monsignor and has certain privileges with respect to ecclesiastical dress and vestments if they choose. Diocesan priests are nominated by their bishop to receive this award.

About The Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice Medal

The Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice Medal is bestowed for distinguished service to the Church by lay people and clergy. It is the highest honor that can be awarded to laity by the Pope.

About the Benemerenti Medal

The Benemerenti Medal is an honor bestowed upon clergy or laity by the Pope in recognition of service to the Church.

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