



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 5, 2021

Contact: Maria Aselage, Director of Media Relations

(843) 513-7605 ~ maria@charlestdiocese.org

Papal Honors to be bestowed on 19 individuals

CHARLESTON, SC - The Most Reverend Robert E. Guglielmone, Bishop of Charleston, will present Papal Honors to 19 people from across the state on Sunday during a Vesper Service at the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in Charleston. COVID-19 protocols and social distancing will be adhered to during the service with limited seating available.

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 bestowed the following honors:

The Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice Cross

- John L. Barker - Chief Financial Officer for the diocese.
- Deacon Gabriel Cuervo - Director of Operations and Field Offices for Catholic Charities for the diocese.
- Manfred Freissle and Christina Freissle - Catholic World benefactors and for their contributions to the diocese.
- Sandra Leatherwood - retired Superintendent of Catholic Schools who served the diocese for 40 years guiding our schools.
- Dr. Lawrence Minette and Iris Minette - for their generosity to the parishes of St. Anthony in Florence, Prince of Peace in Taylors, and St. Mary in Greenville.
- Dr. Helen Ryan - for her contributions to the diocese in education and community outreach.

Benemerenti Medal

- Sister Kathleen Adamski, OSF - Associate Director of the Office of Spirituality and Formation for Ministry who provides pastoral formation for the lay staff of parishes and the chancery office.
- Erena Allen - active board member for Catholic Charities and previous stewardship director and capital campaign manager for St. Anthony of Padua Church in Greenville.
- Frank Dirks - longtime member of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist who has been actively engaged in parish life since moving to Charleston in 1997.
- Peter Freissle - co-founder of the Spartanburg Interfaith Hospitality Network who is actively engaged in ministry to those suffering homelessness.

-- more --

- Richard Fromholtz - founding member of St. Theresa the Little Flower Church in Summerville, who has participated in many ministries associated with the parish. At 83, he is still an active member of several parish committees.
- Rhoda Hiott - active member of St. John the Beloved Church in Summerville as well as the parish secretary.
- Sister Sandra Makowski, SSMN, JCL - Chancellor of the diocese since 2009 and the Vicar for Religious. In addition, Sister Sandra is also the author of "The Side of Kindness" and "The Invisible Women."
- Kathleen Merritt - employed with the diocese since 2001 and is the Director of Ethnic Ministries and a strong spokesperson for African American Catholics.
- Helena Moniz - recently retired, who worked with the Society of the Propagation of the Faith, organized the annual Priest Convocation program, devoted time to raising money for world missions, and was the longtime secretary of St. Theresa the Little Flower Church.
- Dr. William Neglia - longtime member of the Basilica of St. Peter in Columbia and a most generous benefactor to both his parish and the various diocesan ministries in which he participates.
- Deacon Gregory Sams - former deacon at St. Gregory the Great Church in Bluffton, now serving St. Clare Parish on Daniel Island. Deacon Sams has also led numerous sessions of "Christ Renews His Parish" retreat programs throughout the southeast.
- Bonnie Sigers - safe environment manager for the diocese who has guided the Diocese of Charleston in keeping our child protection policies up to date and has instituted safe protection programs in all our parishes and institutions.
- Keith Waring - a longtime member of St. Patrick Church and a native Charlestonian who has used his financial expertise to help build a solid financial base for the diocese.

About the Roman Catholic 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 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 Benerementi Medal is an honor bestowed upon clergy or laity by the Pope in recognition of service to the Church.

###