



THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

ONE PETER YORKE WAY, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94109-6602 · (415) 614-5630 · FAX (415) 614-5633

MEDIA RELEASE

Contact: George Wesolek (415) 606-7112

Papal honors for 16 Catholics at St. Mary's Cathedral

(July 7, 2011) SAN FRANCISCO – Archbishop George Niederauer is pleased to announce that Pope Benedict XVI has awarded papal honors to 16 members of the laity in the Archdiocese of San Francisco as part of the year-long celebration of the 40th anniversary of the dedication of the Cathedral of St. Mary of the Assumption.

Receiving the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice (“For the Church and The Holy Father”) award are Katherine Atkinson, retired director of cemeteries; George Bovone, a member of the St. Mary Cathedral Board of Regents and St. Brendan Parish; Dominican Sister Anne Bertain, director of community services at St. Dominic Parish; Barbara Elordi, director of grief ministry and abuse victim/survivor support coordinator; Pedro Garcia, a member of St. Mary’s Cathedral and founder of Cruzada Guadalupana, an annual pilgrimage of sometimes more than 10,000 people in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe; and Lorraine Moriarty, executive director of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul for San Mateo County.

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Receiving the Benemerenti (“Good Merit”) award are Doug Benbow, director of liturgy at St. Mary’s Cathedral; Vicki Evans, respect life program coordinator for the Office of Public Policy and Social Concerns; Delia Herrera, of the Office of Religious Education and Youth Ministry and who at 36 years of service is the longest serving staff member in the Pastoral Center; Joan Higgins, a member of St. John the Evangelist Parish and former president of organizations including the Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women; Nellie Hizon, coordinator of Filipino Ministry; Diane Luporini, coordinator of the Event Center at St. Mary’s Cathedral; Deacon Jeff Burns; archivist and Catholic Church historian; Betty Reichmann, member of Pastoral Center staff for three decades in areas including vocations and marriage and family life; Mary Schembri, care manager for priests; and Cathedral Music Director, Christoph Tietze.

The Pro Ecclesia award “recognizes the commitment of men and women and their service to the ecclesial community.” The Benemerenti award “is given to those who have shown exemplary service to their church, family and community.” Both are papal honors with the former dating to 1888 and the latter to 1791.

Archbishop Niederauer will confer the medals and diplomas of these distinctive honors at Evening Prayer at St. Mary’s Cathedral on August 14, at 4 p.m. The public is invited to attend.

The Archdiocese of San Francisco covers San Francisco, Marin and San Mateo counties with a Catholic population of 500,000. Eight million Catholics live in California in 12 dioceses or sees - Stockton, San Diego, San Bernardino, Orange, Fresno, Santa Rosa, Oakland, San Jose, Monterey, Sacramento and the Archdioceses of San Francisco and Los Angeles.

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