



ARCHDIOCESE OF HARTFORD
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OFFICE OF
THE ARCHBISHOP

HONORARY MEMBERS OF THE PAPAL HOUSEHOLD

On the occasion of the 175th anniversary year of the Archdiocese of Hartford, I am happy to announce that at my request Pope Francis has named nine of our priests “Monsignors.” Over the next few months, also as part of our anniversary celebration, other Papal Honors will be announced for members of the laity and religious of the Archdiocese.

As Archbishop my focus has been on the Church as a family—the “family of God,” the “household of the faith” as St. Paul puts it. All relationships in the Church are familial at heart, not just institutional. Theologically and spiritually, the Church is “holy mother Church.” Priests are rightly called “Father.” Religious women and men are called “Sister” or “Brother.” We refer to Pope Francis as our “Holy Father” because in this world he is the visible spiritual father of the whole family of God. Our faith family is universal. It transcends not only our natural family, but also our local parish, and even our own diocese.

This is the proper context for understanding the honor that is conferred on a priest who is named a “Monsignor.” The title means that he has been made an honorary member of the Pope’s own household. This custom goes back many centuries, and nowadays is given to designated priests who are at least 65 years old and who are distinguished for their service.

Perhaps the title “Monsignor” doesn’t strike you as very familial. After all, the word literally means “my lord.” But so does the ordinary title given to men in almost all European languages (*Herr* in German; *Pan* in Polish; *Signore* in Italian, *Senor* in Spanish, etc.). In English, “Mister” derives from “Master.” In the same way, “Monsignor” is simply a title of respect.

My intention on the occasion of our 175th anniversary is simply this: to recognize the service of all our priests by honoring a few representatives out of the many who so faithfully teach, sanctify and shepherd the people of God, especially in these challenging times for the Church and for priests. The fact that this is a papal honor also underscores the close bonds of communion between our local church and the Holy Father in Rome. And when a parish priest is named a “Monsignor” it is an honor for his parishioners too.

With these considerations in mind, let me introduce you to our new Monsignors. Eight are pastors and one has provided more than fifty years of service to the Metropolitan Marriage Tribunal. Those who have been named are:

Rev. Thomas Barry, Pastor, Saint Patrick Farmington
Rev. Joseph DiSciaccia, Pastor, Divine Mercy, Hamden

Rev. Joseph Donnelly, Pastor, Sacred Heart, Southbury
Rev. John Georgia, Pastor, Resurrection, Wallingford
Rev. Gene Gianelli, Pastor, Assumption, Woodbridge
Rev. James Kinnane, Adjutant Judicial Vicar, Metropolitan Tribunal
Rev. Frank Matera, Pastor, St. Mary, Simsbury
Rev. Robert O'Grady, Pastor, Mary, Gate of Heaven, Windsor Locks
Rev. Gary Simeone, Pastor, St. Gregory, Bristol

There will be a celebration of the conferral of these papal honors at a prayer service on Sunday February 24, 2019 at 4:00 p.m. at St. Thomas Chapel at the Pastoral Center in Bloomfield (tickets required- seating limited).

Finally, with the New Year, I want to acknowledge and thank all those who sent me greetings at Christmas. Your prayers and support are very much appreciated, even though it is not possible for me to reply by mail. May all of us be blessed with a happy and healthy 2019.



Most Reverend Leonard P. Blair
Archbishop of Hartford

January 2, 2019