

# Pope Honors 12 SE Texas Catholic Priests and Women Religious

Pope Benedict XVI has conferred papal honors on 10 Southeast Texas Catholic priests and two women religious for their many years of dedicated service to the Church and the wider Southeast Texas community. The announcement of the special honors came as a surprise to the 12 honorees who were attending a business meeting and luncheon for the Diocese of Beaumont today.

During the luncheon at St. Pius X Church Hall in Beaumont, Bishop Curtis Guillory, SVD, announced that Rev. James J. Dempsey, Very Rev. Donald J. Golasinski, Rev. Daniel Malain, Rev. William F. Manger, Very Rev. Jeremiah J. McGrath, Rev. F. Walter Montondon, Very Rev. Bennie Patillo and Rev. James Vanderholt all were appointed as Prelates of Honor to His Holiness with the right to the title of Reverend Monsignor.

The Pope conferred the honor of Cross Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice on Rev. Telesforo Blanco, OSA, Rev. Luis Urriza, OSA, Sister Esther Dunegan, IWBS, and Sister Emily Bordages, OP. Religious order priests, because of their vow of poverty, are not appointed prelates and therefore have been given the Cross Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice, one of the highest honors the Pope can give to a Catholic.

In making the announcement, Bishop Guillory said these 12 were nominated in recognition of their faithful service and dedication for many years. Many of them received the benefits of Catholic school education.

“Each of them has served Christ’s Church generously for many decades. They have touched the lives of countless faithful, and all are held in high esteem by their colleagues and the faithful,” Bishop Guillory said.

Rev. Urriza is the senior priest of the diocese at age 87. In June he celebrated the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his ordination as a priest for the Augustinian Fathers of the Castilian Province. He is currently pastor of Cristo Rey, Beaumont.

Rev. Dempsey was ordained 53 years. He is officially retired, but continues to assist with sacramental ministry in the parishes of the diocese.

Rev. Montondon, also retired, served as a chaplain in the U.S. Army for 23 of his 52 years as a priest.

Rev. Blanco, a member of the Augustinian Fathers, is pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Port Arthur. He has been a priest for 49 years.

Rev. Golasinski, ordained 47 years ago, is pastor of Immaculate Conception, Groves.

Rev. Malain is pastor of St. Charles Borromeo, Nederland, and a priest for 43 years. He was also honored as being chosen Mr. Nederland.

Rev. Manger, pastor of St. Anne, Beaumont, has been a priest for 47 years and was a co-founder of Southeast Texas Hospice.

Rev. McGrath is rector at St. Anthony Cathedral Basilica, Beaumont. He was ordained 29 years ago and has been part of the Diocese of Beaumont for 20 years.

Rev. Patillo was ordained 42 years ago. He is pastor of St. Elizabeth Church, Port Neches.

Rev. Vanderholt is pastor of St. Mark the Evangelist, Silsbee. He has been a priest for 52 years.

Sister Dunegan is chancellor of the Diocese of Beaumont. She professed as a sister of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament in 1972.

Sister Bordages teaches French and is campus minister at Msgr. Kelly Catholic High School, Beaumont. She has been a member of the Dominican Sisters for 55 years.