

Archbishop Celebrates Mass Tonight for Judges, Lawyers, Others in Legal Profession

Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien, Archbishop of Baltimore, will celebrate the St. Thomas More Society of Maryland's 51st annual Red Mass (or Lawyer's Mass) tonight, October 20, 2007 at 6 p.m. at St. Mary's Church in Annapolis.

The custom for a special Mass for lawyers and judges has been celebrated since the mid-13th century to mark the annual opening of the courts and to seek the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit in court deliberations. When the custom began, the celebrating priest wore red robes. Conforming to ecclesiastical tradition, the judges of the High Court of England also wore red robes, thereby inspiring the common name by which this votive Mass of the Holy Spirit is now known.

The St. Thomas More Society is comprised of 225 members. St. Thomas More is the patron saint of statesmen and politicians.

Following the Mass, Deacon Gregory Rapisarda, an attorney in Bel Air, will receive the Society's Man for All Seasons Award.