

Archdiocese recognizes 60 high school scholars

By Elizabeth Lowe

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TOWSON – Mark Pietrogiacomo does not take lightly being named valedictorian of Archbishop Curley High School's Class of 2013.

"I'm honored," Pietrogiacomo said. "I hope I can live up to the expectations."

Pietrogiacomo was one of 60 seniors – three from each of the 20 Catholic high schools in the Archdiocese of Baltimore – honored by the Department of Catholic Schools at the 21st Distinctive Scholars Convocation April 23 at Calvert Hall College High School.

To view a slideshow of the event, navigate the arrows below.

"It's a great opportunity to acknowledge all the hard work everyone has put into the four years of high school," said Pietrogiacomo, who takes all advanced placement courses at the Baltimore school. "I try not to put things off. Hard work pays off."

Being selected as a distinctive scholar has "really given me a sense of accomplishment," said Jennifer Powell, a senior at St. John's Catholic Prep in Buckeystown. "My Catholic faith has led me to always have a positive outlook, always look at the bright side."

During a vespers service, Baltimore Auxiliary Bishop Mitchell T. Rozanski told the youths, donning navy blue robes, that the event was a celebration of knowledge.

"Learning is given to us so we can share the gifts God has given us," Bishop Rozanski said. "What we celebrate this evening ... is the fact that you have accepted that light into your hearts. We learn not on our own, but we learn to help others."

Dr. Barbara McGraw Edmondson, superintendent of Catholic schools, spoke about what it means to be "real" in today's world.

She said parents, friends, classmates and teachers are among those who have supported the scholars during their high school careers.

"Today we celebrate your high school achievements," Edmondson said. "Your college experiences will be filled with adventure, challenge and opportunity. Do it all, but do it all with great love. Be real."

The honorees follow:

Archbishop Curley High School: Matthew C. Avara, Christian W. Ingham, Mark A. Pietrogiacomo

Archbishop Spalding High School, Severn: Rachel Cutler; Kirsten Mackey; Kelly Sharer

Bishop Walsh School, Cumberland: Michael J. Bartholomew, Jason C. Behrens, Chaise McCunn

Calvert Hall College High School: Brian Healy, John Lazzaro, Bryan Nixon

The Catholic High School of Baltimore: Sydney Menikheim, Rachael Pilachowski, Samantha Sullivan

Cristo Rey Jesuit High School: Uneeke Ferguson, Dej'a Gladden, Rayquise Jackson

Institute of Notre Dame: Amy Gessler, Rebecca Gessler, Amelia Smith

The John Carroll School, Bel Air: Rebecca Driver, Brianna Glase, Claire Zurkowski

Loyola Blakefield, Towson: Daniel G. Fitzgerald, Brendan J. Galloway, Benjamin A. Mariano

Maryvale Preparatory School: Paige Pacheco, Samantha Stewart, Maggie Eliza Weiskopf

Mercy High School: Mary H. Bennett, Margaret E. Richardt, Janna Quinn Wisniewski

Mount de Sales Academy: Meghan Brown, Mary Connolly, Veronica Rittie

Mount St. Joseph High School: Alexander Genuario, Xavier Gutierrez, Joseph Szczybor

Notre Dame Preparatory School: Olivia Diacopoulos, Jacqueline Penn, Cristiana Salvatori

Our Lady of Mount Carmel School: Jerome Cosby, Andrea Doten, Francis A. Kovalick

St. Frances Academy: Tyshell King, Janelle Rose, Devin Wright

St. John's Catholic Prep, Buckeystown: Christopher Pliszak, Jennifer Powell, Daniel Russo

St. Maria Goretti High School, Hagerstown: Ellie Gorman, Jessica Swarner, Laura Winalski

St. Mary's High School, Annapolis: Harte Olechowski, Julie Reiter, Sara Van Schaik

The Seton Keough High School, Baltimore: Emily Burgess, Tori Sanders, Njeri Warrington

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