

Local Red Mass Oct. 20 in Annapolis

To mark the traditional opening of the judicial year, Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien will celebrate a "Red Mass" at St. Mary in Annapolis Oct. 20. The 6 p.m. liturgy will be followed by a reception and banquet at the Marriott Annapolis Waterfront and is expected to attract judges, lawyers, legislators, executives and other legal professionals from throughout the state.

Deacon Gregory Rapisarda, a lawyer and deacon who will be ordained a priest for the Baltimore archdiocese next year, will be honored at the banquet with the "Man for all Seasons Award" presented by the St. Thomas More Society of Maryland.

"This is Greg's last year of practicing law and he's had a very distinguished career where he was collegial, effective and non-confrontational," said Cornelius D. Helfrich, president of the St. Thomas More Society of Maryland. "He's been the epitome of a professional."

Helfrich noted that Deacon Rapisarda started the Maryland State Bar Association's "civility award" for judges.

The Red Mass is a tradition that dates to 13th century Europe. The first recorded Red Mass was celebrated in 1245 in the chapel of the Order of Advocates, La Sainte Chapelle, which was built by King Louis IX of France. In England, the entire bench and bar attended the Red Mass together at the opening of each term of court. It took its name from the red robes worn by the priest and judges of the high court.

"It's a spectacular event," said Helfrich, noting that about 20 judges are expected to attend this year's local Red Mass. "It's probably the only time of the year when

things spiritual seem to meld with things legal.”

For information about tickets to the banquet, call 410-838-8338.