

Pope confers title of monsignor on Baltimore priests

Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien had the look of a proud father as he stood inside the archbishop's residence in Baltimore Dec. 30.

Several archdiocesan priests were laughing and smiling, sharing stories and handshakes. Just minutes before, they had been told that Pope Benedict XVI had conferred upon them the title of monsignor.

"They represent so many of the ministries of the archdiocese through the priesthood," Archbishop O'Brien said. "They're hard-working priests. That's the key to a good archdiocese and we're grateful to that and wanted to show our appreciation. We just hope the diocese will take some pride in this."

In total, nine priests received the title, including: **Monsignor Richard J. Bozzelli**, pastor of Corpus Christi, Baltimore; **Monsignor William A. Collins**, associate pastor emeritus, Holy Family, Randallstown; **Monsignor Carl F. Cummings**, pastor of St. Jane Frances de Chantal, Pasadena; **Monsignor James W. Hannon**, pastor of St. Ann, Grantsville, St. Gabriel, Barton, St. Joseph, Midland, St. Mary of the Annunciation, Lonaconing, St. Michael, Frostburg and St. Peter; Westernport; **Monsignor J. Bruce Jarboe**, rector of Cathedral of Mary Our Queen, Homeland; **Monsignor Edward M. Miller**, pastor of Baltimore's St. Bernardine; **Monsignor Richard J. Murphy**, pastor of St. John the Evangelist, Frederick; **Monsignor Jay F. O'Connor**, director of the office of clergy personnel; and **Monsignor Kevin T. Schenning**, pastor of St. Joseph Church, Fullerton.

Monsignor Collins, who retired in March 2009 after working for nearly 40 years in the Metropolitan Tribunal, received the title of Prelate of Honor to His Holiness. That title is generally conferred upon older priests or those serving in high diocesan office. Monsignors Bozzelli, Cummings, Hannon, Jarboe, Miller, Murphy, O'Connor and Schenning were named Chaplains to His Holiness, the first level of monsignor.

The honor of conferring the title of monsignor is given to the Holy Father upon the

recommendation of diocesan bishops to acknowledge the contributions that a priest makes to the wider church community. An investiture ceremony will take place on March 7 at 5:30 p.m. at the cathedral.

Pope Benedict also conferred the title of Protonotary Apostolic Supranumerary to **Monsignor Robert A. Armstrong**. Monsignor Armstrong retired at the end of 2009 after serving as rector of the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen for 25 years.

Monsignor Armstrong is the only archdiocesan priest to be conferred a Protonotary Apostolic Supranumerary, a rare and high papal honor. Those monsignors holding the title Protonotary Apostolic Supranumerary are the highest-ranking non-episcopal prelates at the diocesan level. According to an archdiocesan official, the protonotaries apostolic date to the first century, when Pope Clement I nominated certain men as notaries for the city of Rome, where they served as the city's archivists.

All of the papal recognitions come during the Year for Priests.

Many of the new monsignors have connections with one another. Monsignor Miller was once an important mentor for Monsignor O'Connor, who in turn was vocations director for Monsignors Jarboe, Bozzelli, Hannon and Schenning.

Eight of the new monsignors were informed of the honor at a luncheon at the archbishop's residence. Father Adam Parker, priest secretary for the archbishop, passed envelopes containing news releases announcing their elevation to monsignor.

"There was stunned silence," the archbishop said with a grin. "They had no idea it was coming."

Monsignor Murphy's secretary had asked why he was going to the archbishop's residence, joking: "What did you do wrong?"

As he sat down for lunch Monsignor Murphy felt admiration for his peers.

"When you look at guys like Monsignor Miller," he said, "who has worked in the inner city for so long and the excellent work he has done, it's humbling to be in the company of those kinds of people."

Monsignor Hannon thought he was invited to form a pastors' advisory committee and found out, pleasantly, he was wrong.

"I'm struck by the fact that we really do reflect the diversity of the archdiocese," Monsignor Hannon said. "We've got guys in the city, guys who are in the suburbs and I'm more on the rural end of things in Western Maryland. It's a good balance. These kinds of things are not just about the individuals, but about the archdiocese and the people we serve."