



The Diocese of Knoxville

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PRESS RELEASE AND MEDIA ADVISORY
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Three new monsignors named

KNOXVILLE—Three Diocese of Knoxville priests with more than a century's worth of combined service to the Church have been named monsignors, Bishop Richard F. Stika announced Aug. 22.

Receiving the papal honors are Monsignor Pat Garrity, diocesan vicar for priests and pastor of St. John Neumann Parish in Farragut; Monsignor George Schmidt, rector of the Basilica of Sts. Peter and Paul in Chattanooga; and Monsignor Bob Hofstetter, pastor of Good Shepherd Parish in Newport.

The three priests will be invested with the papal honors at a Vespers service at Sacred Heart Cathedral at a date to be announced. Bishop Stika will preside.

The bishop said he chose the three men for the honor, even though "all of our priests are most deserving."

"Father George is the rector of the new basilica and is greatly respected by the priests of the diocese, and he chairs the committee that looks out after their welfare," said Bishop Stika.

"And he has a great love for the church. Father Garrity—last year when I polled the priests about who should be the vicar for priests, it was almost a unanimous choice, so he's well respected. He's president of the priests council, he's a new dean, and so I wanted to recognize his service to the church.

"Father Bob to me is a legend. He has done a variety of work in the Church throughout Tennessee, and he continues to be well thought of and well respected by both the priests and the laity of this diocese."

The latest honors bring to six the number of priests elevated to monsignor in the 23-year history of the diocese. Monsignors Xavier Mankel and Philip Thoni received the honor in 2006 and Monsignor Al Humbrecht in 2009.

Monsignor Garrity was named a Chaplain to His Holiness, and Monsignors Schmidt and Hofstetter were named Prelates of Honor to His Holiness. Those are two of the three grades of monsignor.

"A Chaplain to His Holiness can wear a black cassock with red buttons," said Bishop Stika. "Prelate of Honor is the medium level, and they are allowed to wear the black cassock with the red buttons, but also the red cassock. Then finally there's one that's rarely given, and

more

that's the Protonotary Apostolics, who are monsignors who have been monsignors for a long time and have done a particular service to the Church."

Monsignor Garrity is a native of Wichita, Kan., who celebrated his 35th anniversary as a priest this spring. He has served both diocesan high schools, leading Knoxville Catholic High School as principal from 1985 to 1997. He then went on to serve more than 12 years as pastor of St. Patrick in Morristown before coming to St. John Neumann in 2010, the same year he was named vicar for priests.

Monsignor Schmidt was born in Palmer, Tenn., and ordained a priest in 1970 at Sts. Peter and Paul. Earlier this year he was honored upon his 25th anniversary as pastor of the downtown Chattanooga parish, which was elevated to a basilica this spring. He also serves as chaplain of the Serra Club of Chattanooga.

Monsignor Hofstetter is a Nashville native ordained a priest in 1954. He first served in East Tennessee in 1974, when he became pastor of St. Mary in Oak Ridge. He was pastor of Sacred Heart Cathedral from 1981 to 1987. In 1990 he became pastor of St. Jude in Chattanooga, where he celebrated his golden jubilee of priestly ordination in 2004. He was St. Jude's longest-serving pastor when he left for Good Shepherd in 2005.

Bishop Stika called the monsignor honors "just one simple way in which I can say thank you to these three men of faith."