

Contact: Teresa Peterson 407-432-1974

**All Invited to Red Mass on November 3 to Pray for Judges, Lawyers and Legal Professionals**

WHO: Bishop John Noonan, judges, attorneys, legal assistants, dignitaries and many others

WHAT: Diocese of Orlando is hosting a Red Mass for the first time since the mid 2000s to pray for inspiration and guidance to those serving in the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government

WHERE: St. James Cathedral  
215 N. Orange Avenue, Orlando

WHEN: November 3, 2011  
5:30 p.m. Celebration of Mass  
6:30 p.m. Award Ceremony  
St. Thomas More Award: The Honorable Robert Pleus  
St. Martin de Porres Award: The Legal Aid Society of the Orange County Bar Association  
6:40 p.m. Human Trafficking Keynote Address

**Additional Information:** During the Red Mass, we call upon God the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, to grant light, inspiration and guidance to those serving in the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government.

The Red Mass originated in France in the early 13th century as a service in which God was called upon to help lawyers and judges adhere to truth and justice. The tradition soon spread to England, where, during the reign of King Edward I, the entire Bench and Bar would mark the opening of each Term of Court by attending a Mass together. In those services, the priest-celebrants, as well as the judges of the High Court, wore red robes to signify their willingness to defend the truth inspired by the Holy Spirit, even at the cost of shedding one's blood. Thus, the celebration became popularly known as the "Red Mass."

In the Diocese of Orlando, Bishop John Noonan continues the Red Mass tradition, inviting those who serve in the institutions of the courts and the law to join him in prayer and ask the Spirit of God to guide and direct them in their service to the people of Central Florida.

The event will also include an inaugural awards ceremony where the Honorable Robert Pleus will be recognized with the St. Thomas More Award, and the Legal Aid Society of the Orange County Bar Association will be recognized with the St. Martin de Porres Award. The St. Thomas More Award is presented to a member of the legal profession whose accomplishments in some way represent the principles and ideals of St. Thomas More, the 16th-century English lawyer who defended the Catholic faith to King Henry VIII, and was executed for his beliefs. The St. Martin de Porres Award is given to an organization that demonstrates a "profound love that comes from pure faith and humility of spirit."

This is the first time that either award will be presented at a Diocese of Orlando Red Mass.

Terence C. (Terry) Coonan, Executive Director of Florida State University Center for the Advancement of Human Rights will deliver the keynote address following the Mass on the topic of Human Trafficking. Florida is ranked third in the U.S. in cases of human trafficking. Bishop John Noonan is calling upon the faithful to be actively engaged in the fight against the evils of human trafficking.