

Pope honors nine diocesan priests with title of Monsignor

SPRINGFIELD -- Springfield Bishop Timothy A. McDonnell received word late last week that Pope Benedict XVI has honored nine diocesan priests with the title of "Monsignor." These are the first new monsignors named in the diocese since 1997. The new monsignors will receive the honorary rank as Chaplains to His Holiness and they assume their new title immediately. They were informed by the bishop Dec. 14 of this honor being bestowed on them by the Holy Father.

The newly named monsignors include:

Msgr. Juan F. Garcia, age 71, is a native of Callao, Peru and was ordained in March 11, 1967 in Rome. He became a priest in the diocese in Feb. 2000. He is currently pastor of All Souls and Blessed Sacrament parishes, Springfield, a member of the Presbyteral Council, and chairman of the Latino Ministry Board as well as a member of the Catholic Communications Board of Directors.

Msgr. George A. Farland, age 64, is a native of Springfield and was ordained May 4, 1968. He is currently pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Springfield, a member of the Board of Consultors, co-vicar for clergy, and co-chairman of the Clergy Commission as well as director of Clergy Counseling Services.

Msgr. Homer P. Gosselin, age 64, is a native of Chicopee and was ordained May 3, 1969. He is currently pastor of St. John the Baptist Parish in Ludlow, episcopal vicar of Hampden County West and a member of the Diocesan Building Commission.

Msgr. David J. Joyce, age 64, is a native of Holyoke and was ordained June 29, 1968. He is currently pastor of Our Lady of Hope in Springfield, a member of the Board of Consultors, episcopal vicar for Hampden County East, co-vicar for clergy, and co-chairman of the Clergy Commission.

Msgr. Michael A. Shershanovich, age 61, is a native of the Bronx, N.Y., and was ordained Nov. 28, 1974. He became a priest in the diocese Nov. 20, 1985. Currently the pastor of St. Joseph and Holy Family parishes in Pittsfield, he also serves as episcopal vicar of Berkshire County and as a member of the Presbyteral Council.

Msgr. Ronald G. Yargeau, age 60, is a native of Chicopee and was ordained April 28, 1973. Currently he serves as pastor of Holy Trinity Parish, Greenfield as well as episcopal vicar of Franklin and Hampshire Counties.

Msgr. Daniel P. Liston, age 52, is a native of Pittsfield and was ordained May 11, 1985. He is currently chancellor of the Diocese of Springfield, pastor of Blessed Sacrament

Parish, Northampton, and a member of the Board of Consultors, the Presbyteral Council and Clergy Commission, as well as judge in the Tribunal.

Msgr. John J. Bonzagni, age 51, is a native of West Springfield and was ordained May 24, 1980. He currently serves as judicial vicar, director of Diocesan Pastoral Planning and as a member of the Presbyteral Council.

Msgr. Christopher D. Connelly, age 40, is a native of Springfield and was ordained June 5, 1993. He currently serves as vice-chancellor for the Diocese of Springfield, ecclesiastical secretary to the bishop, and as a member of the Presbyteral Council, Clergy Commission and Vocations Advisory Board.

The honor is bestowed upon priests directly by the pope in consultation with the local bishop. The most outward mark of the new office will be the purple trimmed black cassocks with a purple sash worn by the monsignors during solemn, non-liturgical events.

In receiving word on the honors being bestowed on these diocesan clergy, Bishop McDonnell commented, "The Holy Father has honored all the people of the Diocese of Springfield in naming nine of our priests as his honorary chaplains. The honor may go to nine priests, but the designation is a sign of the Holy Father's pastoral love and concern.

"I am grateful to Pope Benedict XVI for recognizing all the good done by our priests day in and day out."

The bishop went on to say that they were selected because each held a position of significance in the local church and had served the diocese over the years with great devotion and distinction.

A ceremony marking their elevation will be planned for 2007.
