

**Diocesan Medal of Honor for Lifetime Achievement  
2009 Recipients  
Awarded at Mission San Luis, Tallahassee, Dec. 13**

**Co-Cathedral of St. Thomas More, Tallahassee – *Bill & Sheila Ryan***

Members of St. Thomas More for 34 years, Bill and Sheila have served the cathedral and diocese extensively in many valuable leadership and faith endeavors, most notably: 30 years of leadership and service in all capacities for the St. Vincent de Paul Society; 26 years of service as liturgical ministers; 26 years of participation in prayer groups; and 16 years of service and current board members for the Compassionate Friends. The Ryans have been active in marriage ministries such as Marriage Encounter, as well as numerous other church activities including membership of the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate. They are currently active members of Pax Christi.

**Blessed Sacrament Parish, Tallahassee – *Jean Nixon***

Jean is the wife of a Deacon as well as the mother of a transitional Deacon. She is a Eucharistic Minister, leads the Women's Bible Study group, organized the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart and has been a Perpetual Adoration coordinator and promoter for 11 years. Under her leadership, parishioners are in prayer 24 hours a day, seven days a week at Blessed Sacrament Chapel. Jean is an active member of the Women's Guild and serves on the Board of The Open Door Women's Clinic. Jean epitomizes the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy.

**Good Shepherd Parish, Tallahassee – *Edmund & Patricia Kowalski***

Ed and Pat are active, dedicated and committed parishioners. They are devoted to living their faith and provide a model witness of faith practice and parish participation. They are very aware of the church's ministry of proclaiming the Gospel and have always responded to the call to serve. Ed is a member of the Parish Building Committee and has shared his woodworking talents in building parish furnishings and repairs. Pat is one of our sacristans and is very faithful in fulfilling her responsibilities and organizing the preparations for weekday and Sunday Liturgies. She also serves as a lector, a Special Minister of the Eucharist and a leader of a faith sharing group.

**Holy Cross Parish, Chattahoochee – *Josefina Maria Baluga***

Josefina is a devoted Catholic who leads a very prayerful life. She is an excellent leader and works as a psychiatrist at the mental health institution. At present, she is the president of the Parish Finance Council and an active member of the Parish Council. She is the leader of the choir and an excellent organizer of parish activities.

**Immaculate Conception Parish, Perry – *John Robert Weed***

John has been a faithful and dedicated parishioner since 1959. He is an attorney and manages all legal matters for the parish. He has been very active in various forms of outreach to people in need. He is presently a Knight of Columbus, a parish council member and is an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist. John and his wife, Claire, also belong to the group of volunteers who maintain daily Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament from morning 'til night.

**Our Lady of the Rosary Parish, Panama City – Charles and Roberta Micele**

Chuck and Roberta are presidents of the Men’s Society and Altar Society respectively. As such, they both have exhibited indescribable leadership qualities. They are there for their pastor in good times and in bad to discuss the concerns of the parish. Chuck and Roberta, who are very active in many aspects of church life, are truly an ideal couple as parish members.

**Our Lady Queen of Peace, Fountain – Robert & Jerilyn Young**

Since Bob and Jerri have arrived at Our Lady Queen of Peace, they have shared their awesome leadership qualities. They have addressed parish concerns to help make it a place where people want to be. Under their leadership, the parish continues to grow and because of this, we are better off today than ever before. They have energized the parishioners so that all may feel that the Spirit is alive at Our Lady Queen of Peace.

**Those listed below were unable to attend the ceremony. They will receive recognition individually at another time.**

**Saint Anne, Marianna – Laverne Ayo**

Laverne has a desire to help all in need. She headed up a group of volunteers to start a new parish thrift store, which proceeds in turn provided items for the parish food bank and assisted those in need. Her heart is so full of compassion, comfort and love that both workers and shoppers rely on her for an open ear and heart. Laverne brings Christ wherever she goes and to all she meets and does so with deep humility.

**Saint Dominic Parish, Panama City – Efren Cisneros**

Efren is the epitome of the “Good Steward,” always ready to share his time, talent and treasure. He takes Jesus’ command to “do unto others” very seriously. He volunteers for Catholic Charities, is the head of our Parish Spanish Ministry, and is the leader and active member of St. Vincent de Paul. Additionally, he dedicates his time to managing and maintaining the Catholic Cemetery in Panama City, which also entails comforting those who are grieving. He has painted the Church, mowed the lawn and done other humble tasks around the parish. Efren is dedicated to his faith and is always quick to share it with others.

**Saint Joseph Parish, Pensacola – Ronald & Lily Townsend**

Ron and Lily are lifelong members of St. Joseph’s parish and both attended our parish schools. Ron is the Director of our Parish Senior Choir and has been since its inception. He has been on just about every board in the parish and is chair of St. Joseph Booster Club. Lily is co-founder of St. Joseph’s Clinic, is choir member and is a member of the Finance Committee. Both Ronald and Lily are inspiring parishioners and are also civically involved.

**Saint Patrick Parish, Apalachicola – Michael & Monica Moron**

Monica and Michael are both very active in the Parish and in the community. Michael is President of our Pastoral Council and is patient and attentive in seeking to accommodate or solve parish concerns in ways which benefit the parish as a whole. He is also “on-call” to help with parish equipment when needed. Monica is a community organizer, especially those activities that benefit children in our school system. She contributes to the Parish as a sacristan

and through her leadership of The Shamrocks, providing music at the Sunday Mass on St. George Island. Monica does not hesitate to become involved where there is a need.

**Saints Peter and Paul Mission, Panama City Beach – *Lê Nguyen Hieu Chi***

Mrs. Nguyen has voluntarily served at Saints Peter and Paul for the last ten years. She played a tremendous role in the building of Saints Peter and Paul and is the chairperson on the Finance Committee. Mrs. Nguyen is a very faithful and dedicated parishioner and is a great asset to the growth of our parish community.

**Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, Lanark Village - *Mary Ann Shields***

Mary Ann has been this exceptional soft-spoken woman who, for close to 15 years, quietly volunteered to do the bookkeeping of our parish without any compensation. We noticed in her sacrificial self-giving to the Church how many important things in the day-to-day running of the material needs of the church can be done while keeping a low profile. It is like that silent foundation on which every church stands, which is often ignored, but without which no church can be. Mary Ann was like that silent church foundation for our parish for many years.

**Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, Crawfordville – *Jerry & Peggy Mackin***

Both Peggy and Jerry have been generous, active parishioners for many years, leaders in many parish endeavors and at the forefront of the parish's efforts to be of service to the community. Peggy directs our food service programs for both the parish and Ladies' Circle and is our liaison with the county's ecumenical food and service programs. She is an organizer and our representative for Habitat for Humanity. Jerry has been the chair of the parish's Committee on Resources for the Needy since its inception. He operates the Wakulla County Habitat for Humanity Resale Store and is an active member of the Knights of Columbus Round Table.

**Saint Francis of Assisi Parish, Blountstown – *Catherine Hagan***

Catherine is very devoted to the Catholic faith. She is very prayerful and always ready to help others. At present, she is the Finance Council president and is a Parish Council member. Her greatest achievement is the prison ministry. For the last 18 years, she has represented the parish alongside the priest weekly at two facilities and monthly at two facilities.

**Saint John the Evangelist Parish, Panama City – *Bill Kearns***

Mr. Kearns is the chair of the Association of St. Jude which was started at St. John the Evangelist Parish and continues to be based there. Under Bill's leadership, the Association reaches out to all Christians, not just Catholics, to come together and serve Christ by serving those who are in great need. Their interfaith collaboration is a testament to the importance of living those core values that make us all part of the Body of Christ. Bill Kearns, as chair of the St. Jude Association, sets an example to the entire community of faith in action. His charitable work in the Association reminds us all of our call to be Christ to one another.

**Saint Louis Parish, Tallahassee – *Mary Mims Johnson***

Mary is a true disciple of the Lord. She is a member of the Legion of Mary and a Eucharistic Minister. She brings communion to shut-ins and those in the hospital. She makes rosaries and takes care of the altar flowers. Mary visits the nursing homes and gives rides to those in need. She is always dependable and reliable. Every Friday she is there before her Lord in adoration. She also has a great devotion to the Stations of the Cross. In the words of the Blessed Mother, she does whatever He asks of her.

**Saint Margaret Parish, Monticello - *Max & Sharon Bilinski***

Max and Sharon mirror the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy. They constantly give without asking anything in return. For many years they have served the people at Saint Margaret parish and promote the Catholic faith and values in the Jefferson County community.

**Saint Stephen the Protomartyr, Woodville – *Betsy Wonsch***

Betsy's uncompromising willingness to be of service is a most special grace the Lord has given to St. Stephens. Whenever there is a need – a person, the Woodville community, the mission parish – Betsy can be relied upon to be there to help, and if necessary, to lead. For many years, she has been a member of the Mission Pastoral Council, the chair of our Liturgy Committee, an active officer in our Ladies Guild, and the heart of our communications network.

**St. Theresa Parish, Sunny Hills – *Agnes M. Sovis***

Mrs. Sovis has from her earliest years quietly labored in the Garden of Our Lord with a humbleness that bespeaks her gentle nature. Over the last 34 years at St. Theresa parish, Agnes has spent countless hours creating handmade garments and blankets for those in need. She touches many areas of need within the parish, quietly volunteering for tasks others refuse. She is one of the first to visit the sick and comfort the lonely and bereaved. These are but a small number of the things that this remarkable lady has accomplished in our parish.

**Saint Thomas the Apostle Parish, Quincy – *Christine Kohnke***

*Mary Frances will accept for her mother*

Christine has been a very active Catholic parishioner since her arrival to St. Thomas the Apostle parish with her family. She teaches in Catechesis, volunteers at the parish office, and has donated land property. She prepares food for the monthly covered dish meals and annual parish events. She visits the sick people not only of our church, but also in Big Bend Hospice. She has been playing the organ and piano for many years at every 11 a.m. Sunday Mass.

**Saint Vincent de Paul Parish – *Margaret Sargeant***

Margaret is always joyful to help others and enthusiastic in building our community of faith. She is genuinely interested in serving in the church and generously gives her time to make others feel important and comfortable. She is a “Martha” and “Mary” in the scripture of our community, a true servant and disciple of Jesus.