

Judges to Don Traditional Red Robes in Historic “red Mass” for Orange County’s Legal Community

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Garden Grove, Calif., (Sept. 26, 2017) – The Most Rev. Kevin Vann, Bishop of Orange, the Most Rev. Timothy Freyer, auxiliary Bishop of Orange, and the St. Thomas More Society of Orange County will host the 29th annual Red Mass at Holy Family Cathedral in Orange on Monday, October 2nd at 6:00 p.m. The custom originated in Europe in the 13th century and received its distinguished name from the brilliant scarlet vestments worn by the Mass celebrant and Lord High Justices in England. “I am blessed to recognize the dedication and mission of our local legal community and seek to strengthen their resolve in the upcoming judicial session. I am honored to concelebrate and to attend the St. Thomas More Society dinner after the Red Mass and acknowledge the exemplary work of Orange County’s legal professionals,” said Bishop Vann. The Red Mass – an annual event attended by judges, attorneys, law faculty and public officials – is celebrated at the opening of the judicial year in Orange County and throughout the world. For the first time this year, judges attending the Red Mass in Orange County will don red robes in a renewal of an ancient tradition practiced for hundreds of years after the institution of the Red Mass in the 13th century. The roots of the Red Mass can be traced to Paris, where the ceremony was held in the stunning *Sainte-Chapelle* after its construction was completed in 1248 by King Saint Louis IX. In England, the tradition began about 1310 during the reign of Edward I. In both Paris and London, the ceremony was held in autumn to mark the official opening of the fall term of the king’s high court. It was known as the Red Mass from the scarlet robes worn by the royal judges, counselors and prosecutors in attendance, and because the celebrant wore the red vestments appropriate for a Mass of the Holy Spirit. The Red Mass was introduced to the United States in the nineteenth century and is most famously celebrated at the Cathedral of Saint Matthew the Apostle in Washington, D.C., a service typically attended by members of Congress and justices of the Supreme Court. Judges attending Red Masses in the United States have traditionally worn the black robes that prevail in the courts of this country, but that is now changing. A recent movement to renew the ancient traditions of the Red Mass has seen judges increasingly attend in the red robes of their forebears. In Orange County, judges attending the Red Mass will don red robes for the first time since the inaugural mass in 1988. “I am pleased to see this venerable tradition continue to strengthen in Orange County,” said Bishop Freyer. “I look forward to attending a beautiful ceremony in which we ask God to bestow his blessings, and especially the virtues of wisdom, justice and mercy, on all who work in law or government.” The Red Mass will begin at 6:00 p.m. in Holy Family Cathedral with a complimentary dinner to follow at approximately 7:00 p.m. in the parish hall. Those of all faiths who work in law or government are invited, as are their families. Pastoral Center: Communications Department 13280 Chapman Avenue, Garden Grove, CA 92840 **office:** 714-282-3075 **fax:** 714-282-302

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