

**PASTORAL INSTITUTE  
DIOCESE OF BROOKLYN**

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**PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Diocese Celebrates Lay Ministry**

In the late afternoon and early evening on June 23, 2013 about 165 persons gathered at the Immaculate Conception Center for the second annual fundraiser, “Celebrating Lay Ministry: Working in the Vineyard of the Lord.” At this event, which benefits the Pastoral Institute Scholarship Fund, Bishop Frank Caggiano and Our Lady of Refuge parish were honored.

Bishop Caggiano was recognized as a consistent advocate for lay ministry and lay formation. Director of the Pastoral Institute, Gerald Tortorella notes that “Bishop Caggiano often speaks of the necessary collaboration of the laity with clergy and religious in the promotion of the new evangelization. It has been through his support that the lay formation programs of the diocese have been able to flourish as a constant source of well-trained lay leaders.”

Our Lady of Refuge parish, under the stewardship of its pastor, Fr. Michael Perry, can boast that they have the most alumni from the Lay Ministry Program with 31 commissioned lay pastoral leaders as well as one current participant. Fr. Perry has empowered his leaders to act as coordinators or team members for a variety of ministries such as bereavement ministry, sacramental preparation, religious education and pastoral care of the sick.

Also recognized was the Class of 2003 of the Pastoral Institute’s Lay Ministry Program as they celebrated the tenth anniversary of their commissioning as lay pastoral leaders for the parishes of the diocese.

The event’s schedule included evening prayer followed by the awards ceremony. Afterwards, attendees were invited to take part in an outdoor cocktail reception with dessert served in the dining room.

The Pastoral Institute Scholarship Fund, which is administered by the Catholic Foundation for Brooklyn and Queens, provides support that enables many to take advantage of the programming provided by and through the Pastoral Institute.

Photo Caption: Gerald Tortorella presents Our Lady of Refuge parish an icon of Our Lady.  
Photo Credit: Chuck Marcy

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