Gold Palms: Msgr. DeBlanc receives highest chivalry decoration

LAKE CHARLES - Msgr. Irving A. DeBlanc, who formerly served at Sacred Heart Church of Ville Platte and is currently pastor of Our Lady Queen of Heaven Parish in Lake Charles, has received one of the highest decorations in the world of chivalry.

He has been decorated with the Gold Palms of Jerusalem by Cardinal Maximilien de Furstenberg, Grand Master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.

The decoration was presented to Msgr. DeBlanc by Clayton J. Charbonnet of New Orleans, Lieutenant of the Southeastern Lietenancy of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, at a testimonial dinner honoring Msgr. DeBlanc, sponsored by the Knights and ladies of the Order in the Diocese of Lake Charles.

The Palms of Jerusalem is a decoration conferred in recognition of outstanding service to the Order and to the Church in the Holy Land. It exists in three classes – gold, silver and bronze. Msgr. DeBlanc, a Knight Commander of the Order, has been a member since 1978, and is the senior Knight in the Diocese of Lake Charles. This year he is celebrating the 50th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood.

Charbonnet said that Msgr. DeBlanc is the first member of the Order in the Southeastern Lietenancy to receive this decoration. The Lietenancy is made up of 10 southeastern states, the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C. and the Diocese of St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands.

Msgr. DeBlanc also received letters of commendation from Cardinal de Fustenburg himself; and from the Most Rev. Michel Sabah, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem and Grand Prior of the Order; and from Prince Paolo Enrico Massimo Lancelotti, Knight of the Collar and Governor-General of the Order.

Msgr. A.J. Vincent, Vicar for Social Services for the Diocese of Lake Charles and a Knight Commander of the Order, read the letters and presented them to Msgr. DeBlanc.

Another letter of commendation was received from Virgil C. Dechant, Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus, presenting Msgr. DeBlanc with the “Supreme Knight’s Certificate of Commendation,” and saluting Msgr. DeBlanc for nearly 53 years of membership in the Knights of Columbus, during which time he served as council, diocesan and state chaplain, and Faithful Friar of the Fourth Degree.

The letter was read by Robert W. Kline of Lake Charles, former Master of the Fourth Degree for the Knights of Columbus.

Before the dinner, held in the board room of the Pioneer Club in Lake Charles, Msgr. DeBlanc celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving with Knights and ladies of the Order in the Dom Capellan of Our Lady Queen of Heaven Church. Msgr. Vincent gave the homily, in which he paid tribute both to Msgr. DeBlanc and the Knights and their ladies for their commitment to the Church in the Holy Land. Truman Stacey of Lake Charles, section representative for the Order, was lector; and Paul J. Marcantel of Welsh was acolyte.