



**MEDIA ADVISORY – For immediate release**

## **Inaugural Saint Michael Award Recipients Announced**

TORONTO (September 19, 2024) The Archdiocese of Toronto is delighted to announce the inaugural recipients of the Saint Michael Award, recognizing distinguished and faithful service by members of the Catholic community in the Greater Toronto Area. Each year, awards, one for each pastoral region of the archdiocese (Central, North, East and West), will be presented to an individual, couple, group or organization nominated by their local pastor. Nomination packages, which included letters of support and references, were reviewed by an archdiocesan committee before the final recipients were selected.

Saint Michael is the patron saint of the Archdiocese of Toronto. The 2024 award recipients will be honoured as part of a special celebration at the Noon Mass on Sunday, September 29, 2024 (the Solemnity of Saint Michael) at Saint Michael's Cathedral Basilica in downtown Toronto.

The Most Rev. Francis Leo, Metropolitan Archbishop of Toronto, remarked on this year's recipients: "What a joy it is to honour these men and women who have so lovingly served our community with great joy, humility and fidelity over so many years. Inspired by their faith, they are a profound witness of the Gospel in action and reflect the face of Jesus in giving so generously of themselves to others."

The following are the 2024 recipients of the Saint Michael Award:

### **Central Pastoral Region**

**Dan and Ann Fellin, St. Bonaventure's Parish, Don Mills** – parishioners since the late 1960's, Dan and Ann raised three sons and have been longtime members of the Knights of Columbus and the Catholic Women's League respectively. In addition to serving as a parish Minister of Hospitality, Dan has been involved in the collection of food in the parish to serve the homeless as well as facilitating transport to Good Shepherd Ministries. He has also participated in the Knights' outreach to Habitat for Humanity, providing clothing (Coats for Kids) for those in need. Ann has been a longtime member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society and has served in numerous leadership positions, currently heading the parish casserole ministry. For close to twenty years, she has been active in the Community Share Food Bank, located in Don Mills. In addition, she has been a member of the Needlework Guild of Canada alongside a group of women in the parish who donate their products to shelters serving those most in need.

### **Eastern Pastoral Region**

**Americo de Sousa – Our Lady of the Rosary Parish, Scarborough** - Americo has faithfully served his parish community since it was established 37 years ago. Even in his 90's, he still dedicates countless hours to serve the Church. He has given generously of his time as an altar server, collection counter, Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, Manager of Building Maintenance and Pastoral and Finance Council member. As a kind and compassionate parishioner, he has also visited the sick and assisted families with funeral preparations. Americo has faithfully given generously of his heart, strengthening the community through his humble service and selfless giving.

## **Western Pastoral Region**

**Melanie Nazareth, St. Joseph's Parish, Mississauga** - Melanie has been a longtime parishioner and equally energetic and dedicated member of the Catholic Women's League (CWL) since 2003, serving in numerous executive roles. She has co-ordinated volunteers for Canadian Food for Children, sorting food and clothing for missions in developing countries, engaged members to assist at the Mississauga Food Bank and partnered with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and Knights of Columbus to collect food donations. Melanie inspired CWL councils to volunteer at Citizenship Court to welcome new immigrants to Canada. She also started the Prison Fellowship Ministry, co-ordinated an annual Christmas Luncheon in co-operation with the Missionaries of Charity and has volunteered with Mission Angels, a group that provides food and essentials to those living on the streets in Toronto.

## **Northern Pastoral Region**

**Larry and Theresa Keogh, St. Paul the Apostle Parish, Alliston** – Larry and Theresa have been married for 68 years, raised six children and rooted their relationship in service inspired by their faith. Theresa served as parish organist for more than 50 years while also giving generously in numerous roles with the Catholic Women's League. Dating back to the 1980's, Larry has been a Lector, Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, Co-ordinator for Building Committees, Maintenance Supervisor, Member of Pastoral Council, Finance Council and Capital Projects Assistant. Before the hiring of a cleaner for St. Paul's Parish, Larry, Theresa, and family members cleaned the church each week. In January of 1976, when a devastating fire destroyed Knox Presbyterian Church, the couple established a community assistance group and rallied volunteers, later honoured for their leadership by the local mayor. Even in their late 80's and early 90's, Theresa and Larry continue to give generously and are the foundation from which many projects have come to fruition within the parish and local community.

The Archdiocese of Toronto gives thanks for the 2024 Saint Michael Award recipients and all those who were nominated by their pastor for consideration. Additional information regarding the awards can be found by visiting: [www.archtoronto.org/awards](http://www.archtoronto.org/awards).

The Archdiocese of Toronto, Canada's largest diocese, is one of the most diverse faith communities in North America, serving as the spiritual home to approximately two million Catholics with close to 400 priests celebrating Mass in more than 30 languages each week at 225 parishes. The archdiocese stretches from Toronto north to Georgian Bay and from Oshawa to Mississauga.

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