Bishop Kopacz presents Bishop Chanche Medal to local Catholics

JACKSON – Twenty adults and 15 youth in the Catholic community who have extensive and distinguished records of service received the 2020 Bishop Chanche Medal on Saturday, Feb. 22 at the Cathedral of St. Peter the Apostle in Jackson.

“On this occasion we celebrate the tradition ... of our diocese with Bishop Chanche from the very beginning and much more importantly that this is still alive in our time and that the living Lord is in our midst and in our hearts,” said Bishop Joseph R. Kopacz during the celebration.

The individuals awarded were nominated by their pastors or Lay Ecclesial Ministers and recommended for the award by a peer committee to receive the Bishop John Joseph Chanche Medal. This diocesan award, established in 2012 in honor of the Catholic Diocese of Jackson’s 175th anniversary, is given for outstanding service to parish, diocese and community. It is named for the first Catholic Bishop to serve the state of Mississippi after the Diocese of then Natchez was established in 1837 by Pope Gregory XVI.

Bishop Chanche arrived in Natchez in May 1841 to find a handful of missionary priests and no real church building. “His zeal and efforts to grow the Catholic faith in our state is reflected in the faces of the people honored with the award for his name,” said Father Lincoln Dall, Vicar General of the Diocese of Jackson and pastor of St. Jude in Pearl.

The Bishop Chanche Medal was awarded to:

Myrtle Curro Alvarado – St. Michael Catholic Church, Vicksburg
Joy Bellipanni – All Saints Catholic Church, Belzoni
Benjamin and Charity Cannon – Christ the King Catholic Church, Jackson
Charlie Collins – Holy Savior Catholic Church, Clinton
Merrick P. Conway – Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Camden
Julice Fontana Curry – St. Joseph Catholic Church, Greenville
Ronald DiPalma – Holy Cross Catholic Church, Philadelphia
Penny Elliott – Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, West Point
Frank and Fern Fillingim – Cathedral of St. Peter the Apostle, Jackson
Ben and Phyllis Mokry – St. Therese Catholic Church, Jackson
Diana Murillo – St. Mary Catholic Church, Batesville
Tom and Cindy Murphree – St. Alphonsus Catholic Church, McComb
Elizabeth Ann Pullum – Holy Family Catholic Church, Jackson
Lawrence Rabalais – St. Paul Catholic Church, Vicksburg
Dunaway Rooks – St. Jude Catholic Church, Pearl
Cass Salina – St. Mary Catholic Church, Yazoo City
Jennette Larieu Thimmesch – St. Joseph Catholic Church, Woodville
Chuck and Betty Turner – Holy Family Catholic Church, Gloster
Karen Worrell – St. Joseph Catholic Church, Gluckstadt/Madison
Blanca Rose Peralta Zuniga – Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Canton

Those awarded with the Bishop Chanche Youth Medal are:

Carolyn Ann Adams – St. James Catholic Church, Magnolia
Riley Dane Bellipanni – All Saints Catholic Church, Belzoni
Adam M. Eckstein – St. Michael Catholic Church, Vicksburg
Kitty Elliott – Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, West Point
Grayson Foley – St. Richard Catholic Church, Jackson
Rebecca Hahn – St. Paul Catholic Church, Vicksburg
Allison Marie Hanby – St. James Catholic Church, Tupelo
Edwar Hernandez – St. Patrick Catholic Church, Meridian
Gracie McGaugh – St. Joseph Catholic Church, Greenville
Jack Riordan – St. Jude Catholic Church, Pearl
John Luther Selby – St. James Catholic Church, Leland
Zion Anthony Apalla Smith – Annunciation Catholic Church, Columbus
Josie Tripp – Holy Savior Catholic Church, Clinton
Phillip Jonathan Wright – St. Joseph Catholic Church, Gluckstadt/Madison

About the Diocese of Jackson
The Diocese of Jackson has its origins in the establishment of the Diocese of Natchez by Pope Gregory XVI on July 28, 1837. Bishop John Joseph Chanche, SS, arrived four years later in May 1841 as the first bishop of the Diocese. There was no church building and only a handful of missionary priests to welcome him. From that humble beginning 183 years ago, the Diocese of Jackson has grown into a region that encompasses 65 of the state’s 82 counties. It is home to 75 parishes, 28 missions, and some 48,000 registered Catholics. Today, led by Bishop Joseph Kopacz, we celebrate the accomplishments of the people who have built the Diocese and who remain focused on the great gift and mystery of the Holy Eucharist.