News



Fr. Jack Wall, president of Catholic Extension, right, presents the 2019 Spirit of Francis Award to Bishop Curtis Guillory of Beaumont, Texas, in Houston Feb. 9, 2019. (CNS/Roswitha Vogler, Catholic Extension)

by Catholic News Service

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Catholic Extension honored Bishop Curtis Guillory of Beaumont with its third annual Spirit of Francis Award for his "faith, hope, vision, great compassion and love," his leadership, and his commitment to the Catholic Church and the diverse faith community of southeast Texas.

He received the award at a Feb. 9 dinner in Houston. The event drew more than 200 people, including Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, honorary chairman, as well as several elected officials, Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word and other church leaders.

Guillory was the first African-American bishop to head a diocese in Texas and the first to receive the award, inspired by St. Francis of Assisi, Pope Francis and Fr. Francis Clement Kelley, who founded Catholic Extension in 1905. These three are "known for embracing and helping the poor," said an Extension news release.

In presenting the award to Guillory, Fr. Jack Wall, Catholic Extension president, called him "a man of faith, hope, vision, great compassion and love who throughout his life has given witness to the power of the Gospel — the power to transform lives."

"We've been given a great gift in having a leader that has touched our lives in such a genuine, warm, compassionate, life-giving, beautiful way," he said.

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After accepting the award, Guillory said Catholic Extension embodies the spirit of Francis by continuing to help people experience the Lord and deepen their faith. "It is a community of faith moving through history creating hope and aspiration," he said.

The bishop has been on the organization's board of directors for 10 years.

The funds from the Spirit of Francis Award dinner will support special needs in the Texas dioceses served by Catholic Extension, which since its founding has supported the work and ministries of 90 U.S. mission dioceses.

The Chicago-based organization supports the construction and repair of churches, and invests in education, training and support of seminarians, priests, sisters, deacons and lay leaders in those dioceses.