
PRESS RELEASE
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Ottawa, September 4, 2019

**ARCHBISHOP PRENDERGAST TO CELEBRATE A RED MASS FOR JUDGES,
LAWYERS, LAW SCHOOL STUDENTS AND JUSTICE OFFICIALS**

The Most Reverend Terrence Prendergast, SJ, Archbishop of Ottawa, is inviting the faithful, especially judges, lawyers, law students and others who work in the legal system, to the Red Mass which will be celebrated on Thursday September 19 at 5 PM at Notre Dame Cathedral – 385 Sussex Drive, Ottawa. Celebrated traditionally at the opening of the law courts, the Mass requests guidance from the Holy Spirit for those who work in the administration of justice.

This celebration is organized every year by the Saint Thomas More Lawyers' Guild of Ottawa to coincide with the opening of the courts. The objectives of the Saint Thomas More Lawyers' Guild, founded in 1984, are to sponsor and to encourage all members of the legal profession to participate in an annual Red Mass; and to educate its members and the general public as to the principles, ideals, and standards of personal conduct exemplified in the life of Saint Thomas More.

King Louis IX of France began the Red Mass tradition in 1245 at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. The name came from the red vestments traditionally worn to symbolize the tongues of fire (the Holy Spirit) that descended on the Apostles at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). Judges of the High Court of England and all doctors of law wore red robes or academic hoods.

The Red Mass spread throughout Europe, and, in 1925, came to Canada at St. Michael's Cathedral in Toronto. Then, in 1928, it was celebrated in the U.S.A. at St. Andrew's Church in New York City. Since 1953, the Red Mass has been celebrated in Washington D.C. with attendees including Supreme Court Justices and the American President.

Come to the Red Mass and join the company of all those who have observed this tradition for nearly 800 years. It is our annual reminder that all law is based on the Eternal Law of God, as acknowledged in the preamble of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms – "Whereas Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law..."

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