

Special faith community members gather for first White Mass

PALM BEACH GARDENS | BY LINDA REEVES

Doctors, nurses and health care professionals gathered in prayer and praise at the Cathedral of St. Ignatius Loyola on May 3 to celebrate the first White Mass here.

Wearing red vestments, Bishop Gerald M. Barbarito presided at the White Mass. Clergy from St. Ignatius Loyola also wearing red were on hand for the early morning celebration.

“We want to thank and honor all those who work with the sick,” said Bishop Barbarito, who referred to medical and health care workers as a special part of the community and their work as “a loving, caring profession.”

“We are having the White Mass for a special blessing for people working in the medical and health care fields,” said Mass organizer Bernadette Macy about the people of the diocese faced with daily struggles in assisting the sick. “We want to show our gratitude for the work they do.”



Bishop Gerald M. Barbarito accepts the gifts from Jim Kolar, a parishioner of St. Jude in Tequesta and director of St. Joseph's Assisted Living Community in Jupiter, at a White Mass on May 3 at the Cathedral of St. Ignatius Loyola in Palm Beach Gardens. The White Mass was organized by the Wellness and Faith Community Nursing Program of Catholic Charities and honored those working in the medical and health care fields. This was the first Annual White Mass organized by Catholic Charities, and leaders hope it will be an annual event each May during Nurses Week.



Michele Pierre Louis, left, a health care specialist, and Mary Jean Houlahan, a registered nurse and manager working in the field of oncology at Good Samaritan Medical Center in West Palm Beach, sing and praise God during a White Mass on May 3.
LINDA REEVES | FC

Macy is program administrator of Catholic Charities Wellness Ministry supported by the Allegany Franciscan Ministries Palm Healthcare Foundation and Frank J. Lewis Foundation. The ministry currently has seven registered nurses working out of parishes in the diocese, serving as health advocates, educators and counselors.

Mary Jean Houlahan, a parishioner of St. Martin de Porres in Jensen Beach and registered nurse and manager at Good Samaritan Medical Center in West Palm Beach working in oncology, was on hand and dressed in white. She carried a small missal holding the names of patients she includes in prayers.

“We need the spiritual renewal ourselves,” said Houlahan. “I am very grateful to have this opportunity.”

During his homily, Bishop Barbarito said that the people who care for the sick are special and bring the good news of Jesus Christ and “the healing face of God.” “As we celebrate this first White Mass,

we pray for all those who work with the sick,” he said. “Through their loving hands the sick and their families will come to know the love of God.”