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'Exemplary Catholics' honoured by Pope

By Damir Govorcin

THE Archbishop of Sydney, George Cardinal Pell, conducted the investiture for "three exemplary Catholics" from the Sydney archdiocese who were awarded Papal honours for many years of selfless devotion to family, the Church and to the wider community.

The special ceremony, held at Cathedral House on November 12, honoured John Morahan, a tireless worker and volunteer with the St Vincent de Paul Society for more than 50 years, who was created a Papal Knight of the Order of St Sylvester; Mary Harrold, former state president and long-time member of the Catholic Women's League (CWL), who was created a Dame Commander of the Order of St Gregory the Great; and Julie Kelly, known for her work with Catholic adult education and founder and national director of Project Rachel, who became a Dame of the Order of St Sylvester.

The chancellor of the archdiocese of Sydney, Mons John Usher, said Mr Morahan had devoted more than 50 years of

"outstanding service and dedication" to the St Vincent de Paul Society.

He has held the following positions: president of the Sydney Archdiocesan Council (12 years); president of the Australian National Council (five years); president of the NSW State Council (five years).

Mr Morahan's son, Michael, said his father was "very impressed, very grateful" to be honoured in this way.

"He didn't do the work to get recognition or pats on the back – he did it because he liked to help people," he said.

"Dad has done so much for so many years to help others and this award is for a job well done."

Mr Morahan co-ordinated the Society's response to Cyclone Tracy and helped provide urgent assistance to the citizens of Darwin.

He has also been a board member of *The Catholic Weekly*, a member of his local CatholicCare committee, the first president of the Gympie parish Council and has served as an acolyte to the parishes of Gympie and Miranda.

Mons Usher said: "Mr Morahan has devoted his life



'DEDICATION': Mons Usher reads the citation for Mr Morahan before the Vinnies veteran received his papal knighthood.

to his family and to the Church and is known to be an exemplary Catholic man, regular in the practice of his faith."

Mrs Kelly, who for more than 20 years has been involved with Catholic adult education, is the founder of Project Rachel, the Australian version of the American Rachel's Vineyard Retreat Ministries which help men and women heal from post abortion trauma and grief.

She introduced this compassionate ministry of healing and reconciliation in Sydney

in 2000 and since then has overseen the development of the healing retreats in every capital city.

"It's astounding that I should be honoured in this way," said Mrs Kelly.

"It's a strong affirmation of the work I have been doing in helping men and women heal from post abortion grief.

"The Church has said 'yes' to this work and has affirmed it so strongly."

Mons Usher said Mary Harrold has continuously served the CWL for more than 34 years in many domestic and international forums, and is known and admired for her unstinting devotion to her family, the Church and the community at large.

She has devoted more than 30 years to involvement with intellectually disabled youth and adults.

She has served as vice-president and president of CWL Sydney; CWL NSW State president; CWL Sydney finance committee and board member of Marian Court, Strathfield; CWL Sydney Social responsibilities convenor and delegate to CWL National Council of Women.

In May, Papal knighthoods were conferred on businessmen Peter Ferris and James Dominguez and Associate Justice John McLaughlin.

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