

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Catholic Extension honors Trini Mendenhall with Spirit of Francis Award

Houstonian is recognized for two decades of service to Houston community

HOUSTON, TEXAS — [Catholic Extension](https://www.catholicextension.org) honored Houstonian Trini Mendenhall with its sixth-annual Spirit of Francis Award, recognizing Mrs. Mendenhall for two decades of generous, philanthropic service to the Houston community and in the state of Texas. The Catholic Extension Spirit of Francis Award recognizes an individual or group who has made a significant impact on the mission of the Catholic Church in America through service or philanthropy.

Mrs. Mendenhall received the award at a Feb. 17 dinner in Houston, TX, where other notables such as the 2019 Spirit of Francis Award recipient Bishop Emeritus Curtis J. Guillory, S.V.D., D.D., Diocese of Beaumont, were in attendance. One incredible Catholic Texan who was intimately familiar with the work of Catholic Extension was Archbishop Emeritus Joseph A. Fiorenza, whose memory we recognize.

"I am truly honored and humbled to receive the Spirit of Francis Award," Mrs. Trini Mendenhall, said. "As a woman and mother, it is in my nature to be nurturing and caring, and I have always aimed to practice my faith by following what our good Lord called us to do: love one another. For me, it's the joy of helping the most vulnerable people in our community that makes it all worthwhile. Thank you, Catholic Extension, for this recognition, and for the work you do in underrepresented communities, especially here in Texas."

Father Jack Wall, president of Catholic Extension, awarded Mrs. Mendenhall, saying, "On behalf of Catholic Extension and all the people who have been touched by your love, we recognize in you and are grateful that you truly embody the Spirit of Francis, who recognizes the face of Christ in the poor."

Fr. Wall continued, "Mrs. Mendenhall, you have certainly built up vibrant Catholic faith communities, and God bless you for all that you are."

In 1997, Mrs. Mendenhall founded the Trini and O.C. Mendenhall Foundation, which empowers women, children, and marginalized communities. In 2008, The Mendenhall Achievement Center at the University of St. Thomas was established demonstrating her commitment to Catholic education and student success in Houston. In September 2002, she established the Mendenhall Asthma Research Laboratory at Baylor's Biology of inflammation Center in memory of her late husband. Trini's dedication to her Catholic values are made evident through her continuous work on behalf of children, women, and the vulnerable.

Additionally, Mrs. Mendenhall is co-founder of Fiesta Mart and President of Fulton Shopping Center. She currently serves on the board of the O.C. and Trinidad Mendenhall Foundation Presidential Endowed Scholarship for inner-city Catholic schools and on the board of the College of Education at the University of Houston. Previously, she served on the board of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, Ronald McDonald House, Baylor College of Medicine, United Way's Initiative and Alexis de Tocqueville Society, and many more.

The Spirit of Francis Award is inspired by its three namesakes: St. Francis of Assisi, Pope Francis, and Father Francis Clement Kelley, the founder of Catholic Extension—all of whom are known for embracing and helping the poor. Proceeds from this event will enable Catholic Extension to continue to support rural mission churches in Texas where resources are scarce, but where faith is strong.

Catholic Extension has been an integral part of the Catholic Church in Texas, since its founding in 1905. Since then, Catholic Extension has built and repaired over 1,400 church structures in all 15 dioceses in Texas. Catholic Extension currently walks in solidarity with Catholic Faith communities in the dioceses of Amarillo, Beaumont, Brownsville, El Paso, Laredo, Lubbock, San Angelo, and Tyler.

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About Catholic Extension: Founded in 1905, Catholic Extension works in solidarity with people to build up vibrant and transformative Catholic faith communities among the poor and in America's poorest regions. For more information visit www.catholicextension.org; follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/catholicextension or on Twitter at [@CathExtension](https://twitter.com/CathExtension).