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## **Cardinal Kevin Farrell Returns to Dallas to Advocate for the Poor**

*Catholic Extension Society Organizes Benefit Dinner in his Honor to Support the Church  
in Texas*

DALLAS, TEXAS — Cardinal Kevin Farrell, the former bishop of Dallas, will make a rare visit to Dallas on May 17, 2023 to attend a benefit dinner in his honor, hosted by [Catholic Extension](https://www.catholicextension.org), a pontifical organization, whose mission is to support poor Catholic faith communities throughout Texas and the U.S.

During the dinner, the Cardinal will be presented with the “Spirit of Francis Award” from Catholic Extension, given to those whose commitment of service or philanthropy to the poor are reminiscent of the award’s three namesakes: St. Francis of Assisi, Pope Francis, and Francis Clement Kelley, the founder of Catholic Extension.

The visit marks only the second time that Cardinal Farrell has returned to Dallas since his appointment by Pope Francis in 2016 to lead the Vatican’s Dicastery for the Laity, Family, and Life, which also coincided with his elevation to the College of Cardinals.

Farrell served the Diocese of Dallas for nine years as its bishop, where he endeared himself to many of the faithful and community leaders who continue to cherish the memory of his tenure as their shepherd. Likewise, the Irish-born Farrell came to love the people of the growing North Texan diocese he once led, saying upon his departure, “I have left many different countries in my lifetime. Nothing I can assure you has cost me as much as leaving Dallas has.” Farrell insists that these words continue to be true to this day.

The benefit dinner will be a joyful homecoming for Dallas' beloved former bishop. The event will be held at the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center and is being co-chaired by Lydia and Dan Novakov and Mary and Rich Templeton.

"We are overjoyed to have Cardinal Farrell accept Catholic Extension's invitation to this celebratory dinner with the Catholic people of Dallas so that we can honor him," said Lydia Novakov.

Mary Templeton added, "This will be an opportunity to show Cardinal Farrell our love and appreciation not only for his past work among us, but for the ministry that he has undertaken on a global scale to strengthen families, support lay people, and uphold the dignity of human life."

More than just a reunion, however, Farrell comes back to Dallas at the invitation of his successor, Bishop Edward Burns, with a serious agenda on behalf of Catholic Extension and the poor Catholic faith communities of America.

Upon receiving the Spirit of Francis Award, Farrell is expected to ask his former flock to support the mission of Catholic Extension, which funds thousands of Catholic leaders, ministries and churches in 40 states and U.S. territories, including eight dioceses of Texas which have not attained the economic prosperity or population density of Dallas.

As one of the pope's top advisors, Farrell is steeped in the Holy Father's call to create "a poor church for the poor"—one which goes to the peripheries of society to ensure that the Church's spiritual and pastoral care is extended to all. Catholic Extension was founded in 1905 for this very purpose, and as a pontifical society overseen by the Holy See, Catholic Extension is tasked with building faith communities among the poor and in the poorest regions of the United States. Since its founding, Catholic Extension has built and repaired 13,000 Catholic church structures in the U.S.—of which 2,000 are in Texas—more than any other state.

Last year, the organization provided funding to 87 dioceses encompassing more than 15 million Catholics. Among the Catholic communities supported by Catholic Extension are those in Alaska where Bishop Edward Burns was among the recipients of Catholic Extension's financial support.

From 2009 to 2017, Burns served as Bishop of Juneau, Alaska, whose Catholics, especially Native Alaskans, are spread out over vast distances in areas not accessible by roads. Catholic Extension funds the costs to fly priests and ministers to these communities to administer the sacraments.

"I give thanks for the extraordinary work of Catholic Extension," said Bishop Burns. "For more than a century, this invaluable organization has supported the growth and vitality of Catholic faith communities across our nation, particularly in areas of poverty and need."

Dallas has had one of the highest rates of population growth of any diocese in the country, meaning that it is in an increasingly unique and influential position to have a broader impact in American Catholicism. Farrell is expected to invite his fellow Dallasites to consider how their generosity to Catholic Extension can have a profound ripple effect throughout the state and country, as well as fulfill Pope Francis' dream of a Church that gravitates towards the peripheries and identifies with the vulnerability of others.

Proceeds from the award dinner will support Catholic Extension's work of building and repairing churches, supporting leaders, and funding critical ministries among the poor throughout the state of Texas.

More information on the award dinner can be found on Catholic Extension's [website](#).

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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](http://www.catholicextension.org); follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/catholicextension](https://facebook.com/catholicextension) or on Twitter at [@CathExtension](https://twitter.com/CathExtension).