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Media Contact: Laura Bowman

lbowman@catholicextension.org

Laura: 512.913.6624

Prominent Houston educator, Sister Jane Meyer, O.P. honored with Spirit of Francis Award

Sr. Jane recognized for commitment to education and social justice in Houston area

HOUSTON, TEXAS — [Catholic Extension Society](http://CatholicExtensionSociety.org) honored Sr. Jane Meyer, O.P., former Head of School at St. Agnes Academy, with its seventh annual Houston [Spirit of Francis Award](#), for her decades of commitment to Catholic education and promotion of social justice. The prestigious 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.

Sr. Jane received the award at a benefit dinner on Feb. 15 in River Oaks, where other notables such as Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, Archbishop of Galveston-Houston, Most Reverend Curtis J. Guillory, S.V.D., D.D., Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Beaumont, and Raye G. White, the 2022 Catholic Extension Society Houston Spirit of Francis Award Recipient, were in attendance.

Father Jack Wall, president of Catholic Extension Society, awarded Sr. Jane, saying, "Sr. Jane is a great model of the spirit of Francis Clement Kelley, the founder of Catholic Extension Society, who said to go to the margins and awaken the mission spirit. She lives the word of St. Francis and brings forth for everyone a great sense of their sacredness and dignity in the world."

"Thank you, Catholic Extension, for this incredible honor; I am overwhelmed with gratitude," said Sr. Jane. "As a Dominican Sister, I truly believe in the spirit of St. Francis, and I'm grateful to Catholic Extension's mission of serving the most vulnerable populations and building up transformative, Catholic faith communities."

Sr. Jane's passion and commitment to education began when she served at Monsignor Kelly High School in Beaumont as a teacher and principal from 1971 to 1981. She then transferred to

Houston where she was Head of School at St. Agnes Academy until her retirement in 2022. Under Sr. Jane's leadership, St. Agnes' enrollment increased by 50% to 900 students.

A former student and colleague, Denise Stasio, praised Sr. Jane as a "phenomenal teacher," and said Sr. Jane had the capability to "build a community wherever she went."

During Sr. Jane's ministry at St. Agnes, her vision consisted of building a school of excellence, developing women of faith, and helping each student recognize and live out their talents. She also led major initiatives to construct a state-of-the-art science center, student life center and performing arts center.

Bishop Curtis J. Guillory, Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Beaumont said, "Sister Jane prepared young ladies to go out into the world with life-giving values and an excellent education, with a sensitivity to reaching out to those on the margin."

He continued, "Empathy and compassion is who she is. Those values have transformed her and therefore, transformed others. She personifies the spirit, the generosity, and the ministry of St. Francis."

Outside of education, Sr. Jane's passions extend to worldwide social justice advocacy. Following the 2010 earthquakes that devastated Haiti, St. Agnes students challenged Sr. Jane to jump out of a plane if they raised \$25,000 for disaster relief. The campaign far exceeded the original goal, raising more than \$82,000. Sr. Jane kept her promise to the students and was therefore dubbed, 'The Flying Nun.' In 2012, she founded a Sister School Partnership with Our Lady Grace in Kisumu, Kenya—establishing annual computer, calculator and book donations for this African-Catholic community.

Sr. Jane's tireless efforts to educate women and advocate for the poor and marginalized around the globe have made her the recipient of numerous local and national awards, such as the National Catholic Educational Association Catholic Secondary Education Award, Free Market Foundation Leader of Excellence Award and the St. Anne's Distinguished Alumna Award.

Sr. Jane's legacy at both Monsignor Kelly High School and St. Agnes Academy demonstrates her consistent commitment to serving others. She has instilled the Catholic message of service to the poor and marginalized in generations of women through her guidance and leading by example.

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 the award dinner will support Catholic Extension Society's work of building and repairing churches, supporting leaders and funding

critical ministries among the poor throughout the state of Texas, including the ministries of religious sisters.

Catholic Extension Society has been an integral part of the Catholic Church in Texas, since its founding in 1905, when supporters helped found the ministries of horseback riding priests in the Rio Grande Valley. Since then, Catholic Extension Society has built and repaired over 1,400 church structures in all 15 dioceses in Texas. Catholic Extension Society currently provides support to the dioceses of Amarillo, Beaumont, Brownsville, El Paso, Laredo, Lubbock, San Angelo and Tyler.

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

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About Catholic Extension Society: Founded in 1905, Catholic Extension Society 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).