



ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER

Richard Gladwell, host of WXXI's 'With Heart and Voice,' to receive prestigious Vatican medal



Mr. Gladwell

Rochester, New York – Bishop Matthew Clark will present the prestigious Benemerenti Medal, one of the Vatican's highest honors to the laity, to Richard Gladwell, host and producer of WXXI's long-running live and nationally syndicated radio program *With Heart and Voice*.

The medal will be given to Mr. Gladwell by Bishop Clark at a special concert in Mr. Gladwell's honor at Sacred Heart Cathedral, 296 Flower City Park, on March 29, 2009. Choirs and musicians from several area churches will be on hand to perform musical selections, all favorites of Mr. Gladwell, and officials from WXXI and other community organizations will offer thoughts about his accomplishments.

The event, which is free and open to the public, begins at 2 p.m. and will be followed by a reception. Media coverage is welcome.

The Benemerenti Medal was instituted by Pope Gregory XVI in the early 19th Century and is conferred on those who have exhibited long and exceptional service to their community. The gold-colored medal is inscribed with the word Benemerenti – "to a well deserving person." The ribbon attached to the medal is of the Papal colors.

Long a listener and after receiving requests of several other admirers of Mr. Gladwell's work, Bishop Clark wrote to Pope Benedict XVI to ask that the award be given to Mr.



Gladwell, whose program of Western sacred music has inspired and moved generations of listeners locally and across the nation. In his petition, the Bishop called Mr. Gladwell "a man of integrity" who brings "spiritual benefit and brightens Sundays" for many listeners everywhere. Pope Benedict, himself a musician and lover of music, was glad to comply with Bishop Clark's request.

Said Mr. Gladwell, "Never in my wildest dreams would I have thought that I would receive such a high honor as the prestigious Benemerenti Medal given to me by his Holiness Pope Benedict XVI. This award, coming to me in the twilight of my years, reminds me that God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform. Thank you

Heavenly Father, and thank you Holy Father, for the chance to do what I have done over the past 35 years, and that is to bring your music to the attention of the public It has all been so worth while."

From his personal collection of more than 6,000 records and over 4,000 compact discs, Mr. Gladwell produces *With Heart and Voice* in the studios of WXXI FM 91.5 in downtown Rochester. His selections span the full range of Western religious music, from the Gothic period to the 21st century. The local version of *With Heart and Voice* was first broadcast in 1975, and national audiences have been able to share in this success since 1982.

Mr. Gladwell was born on December 2, 1920, and educated in London, England. At age six, he auditioned and was accepted as a chorister in an East London Church. Prior to military service from 1939-1945, he sang in church choirs in and around Essex and the midland counties. It was during this period that he became entrenched in the repertory of the Anglican Church. He later received some of his musical education through the extramural program of Birmingham University in conjunction with the BBC, which provided all of the musical illustrations for these courses.

Mr. Gladwell came to the United States in 1955 and worked in management positions for both Xerox Corporation and the Eastman Kodak Company. As a collector of recordings, he was interested in radio and was given a part-time position as an announcer for a Rochester classical music station. It was at this time the seed for *With Heart and Voice* was sown.

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"There was a hunger for sacred choral music at the time, and I satisfied that hunger with an hour of choral and organ music broadcast every Sunday morning," according to Mr. Gladwell.

"Programming the weekly hour is almost an obsession," Mr. Gladwell adds. "It takes between five and 10 hours to prepare for each hour on the air. This preparation creates the fascinating juxtaposition of one piece against the other that characterizes the broadcasts. As the program's host, I consider that what the audience will enjoy hearing is far more important than my own personal tastes."

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