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For Release May 24, 2007

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## **On June 2 and 3 at the Seminary and Cathedral Msgr. James Robinson to Celebrate Golden Jubilee**

Msgr. James Robinson, SSE, rector emeritus of the Cathedral of the Most Blessed Sacrament, will be honored at a dinner on Saturday, June 2, at Sacred Heart Major Seminary to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. He will celebrate a Mass of Thanksgiving the next day, Sunday, June 3, at the Cathedral of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Sacred Heart Major Seminary is located at 2701 Chicago Blvd., Detroit. Cocktails will begin at 6 p.m. and dinner at 7 p.m. For ticket information, call 313-865-6300 ext 221. Blessed Sacrament Cathedral is located at 9844 Woodward Ave., Detroit. The Mass of Thanksgiving will be at 10 a.m. on Sunday, June 3, and is open to the public.

Msgr. Robinson, 76, was ordained on May 30, 1957 in Burlington, Vermont, as a priest of the Society of St. Edmund. At that time, there were less than 40 African-American priests serving in the United States. A native son of Selma, Alabama, he came to be involved with what became the St. Elizabeth Mission of Selma, established by the Society of St. Edmund in 1937.

Msgr. Robinson was greatly inspired by the priests and religious of the mission, whose actions and outreach included advancing civil rights and improving the community for African-Americans in the segregated South. Having become a Catholic in his teens, he chose to attend Xavier University. After two years of study at Xavier, he entered the St. Joseph Novitiate in Putney, Vermont, where he first professed to enter the Edmundite Order. Msgr. Robinson then attended St. Michael College in Vermont, prior to entering St. Edmund Seminary and becoming a priest of the order.

Early in his priesthood, Msgr. Robinson's chosen life's work enabled him to bring dissident racial forces together in situations where both sides were willing to accept his leadership. While ministering in his home town of Selma in 1971, he was credited with working out a compromise, commonly referred to as the "Selma Accords," that addressed housing and employment concerns and defused racial tensions. In addition to his work in Selma, during his first nearly 20 years of service, Msgr. Robinson was assigned pastoral and teaching responsibilities in Elizabeth City, NC, and was a high school educator in Dunkirk, NY.

In 1976, Msgr. Robinson came to the Archdiocese of Detroit, where he was assigned by Cardinal John Dearden to serve at St. Catherine-St. Edward Parish on Detroit's Eastside. In 1983, he was named rector of the archdiocesan Cathedral of the Most Blessed Sacrament. While rector, he served on several commissions at the request of then Detroit Mayor Coleman Young, including as chairman of the Detroit Cable Communications Commission formed to issue the first cable television franchise for the city of Detroit. As rector of the cathedral, he welcomed Pope John Paul II to the cathedral church in 1987 and oversaw a \$15 million renovation project begun in 2001.

Following Msgr. Robinson's retirement as rector after 20 years of service on July 1, 2003, Cardinal Adam Maida noted: "Msgr. Robinson has graciously and wisely coordinated many different challenges. First and foremost, he has been a loving pastor to the people of the immediate area, who look to the cathedral as their 'home parish.' As rector, he helped coordinate all the major events which have happened there under his tenure, including annual events such as the Chrism Mass and extraordinary circumstances such as the 1987 papal visit.

"In addition, he has served in a number of leadership capacities and has been a trusted friend and confidant throughout the years. In view of the unique circumstances of the cathedral, and in recognition of his outstanding service, I have chosen to appoint Msgr. Robinson rector emeritus," the cardinal concluded.

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