



# *The Diocese of Knoxville*

*Living our Roman Catholic faith in East Tennessee*

MEDIA ADVISORY  
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## Vietnamese Catholic community established in Chattanooga

### Masses to be celebrated at Notre Dame High School

**KNOXVILLE**— Further reflecting the continued growth and diversity of the Catholic Church in East Tennessee, Bishop Richard F. Stika has formally established a Public Association of the Faithful for the Vietnamese Catholic community in the Chattanooga area.

The establishment of a Public Association of the Faithful is the first step in the canonical process that one day could lead to the creation of a new parish for the Vietnamese community there.

The announcement was made during a Mass on July 14 at St. Stephen Church in Chattanooga. The Mass was celebrated by Father Nick Tran, a native of Vietnam and a priest of the Archdiocese of Hartford, Conn., who arrived in Tennessee on July 6 to begin serving as chaplain and moderator for the Chattanooga association.

The Mass was attended by 180 Vietnamese Catholics who, until now, have been gathering informally at St. Stephen to celebrate Mass in their native language.

“This is the beginning of a wonderful journey for all of you,” Deacon Sean Smith, chancellor of the Diocese of Knoxville, said during the Mass. “We hope and pray that you will soon be elevated as a Catholic mission and ultimately as a new parish.”

The new association is named after St. Faustina Kowalska, a Polish nun who inspired a devotion to the Divine Mercy.

“Through its name, the St. Faustina Public Association of the Faithful will connect our Vietnamese community in Chattanooga with our Vietnamese parish in Knoxville named Divine Mercy,” Bishop Richard F. Stika said. “God willing, someday in the near future we will one day have a St. Faustina Parish in Chattanooga,” he added.

The Catholic community will begin celebrating Mass at Notre Dame High School in Chattanooga on Sunday, July 21.

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