

NEWS RELEASE * National Federation of Priests' Councils
333 N. Michigan Avenue * Suite 1114 * Chicago, IL 60601-4002 *
Tel: (888) 271-NFPC (6372) * 312-442-9700
Web site: www.nfpc.org E-Mail: nfpc@nfpc.org

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For information contact:
Alan Szafraniec szafraniec@nfpc.org

Father Ronald Rolheiser, OMI to receive 2016 *Touchstone* award

Oblate of Mary Immaculate Father Ronald Rolheiser, author, columnist, retreat leader, and president of the Oblate School of Theology will receive the 2016 National Federation of Priests' Councils *Touchstone* award.

The award is presented annually to “the priest who, in the view of the National Federation of Priests' Councils, is one whose service in the Gospel of Jesus Christ exemplifies the purpose and goals of the Federation.

“In particular, his leadership enhances the ministry of others and his words and deeds support the life and ministry of priests; thus he is, as it were, a *Touchstone* for genuine, quality priesthood.”

The award will be given to Father Rolheiser at a banquet on April 19 during the NFPC's annual Convocation in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Father Rolheiser, a native of Macklin, Saskatchewan, Canada was ordained to the priesthood in 1972 in his religious community of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. He earned a B.A. (University of Ottawa, 1969), B.Th. (Newman Theological College, 1973), M.A. (University of San Francisco, 1974), M.R.Sc. (University of Louvain, 1982) and PhD/STD (University of Louvain, 1983). During and after his own studies, he taught theology and philosophy at Newman Theological College, in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

In 1982 while living and studying in Belgium, Fr. Ron began to write a regular feature column in the Canadian newspaper, *The Western Catholic Reporter*. The column offered reflections on various theological, church and secular issues.

His column called *In Exile*, is now carried by almost 100 newspapers worldwide. In addition, he is a prolific writer, authoring twenty-one books on spirituality since 1979. His 2014 book titled *Sacred Fire: A Vision for a Deeper Human and Christian Maturity* (Image Book, Random House) won the highest award for a hard cover book on spirituality from the Catholic Press Association. His 1999 book, *The Holy Longing* (Doubleday, New York) is considered a “tour de force” in foundational Christian spirituality. It is now translated into multiple languages.

In 1991, while on sabbatical, Fr. Rolheiser was asked by his religious community to serve as the Provincial Superior of his home province. He served two terms as Provincial of St. Mary's Province (Canada). In 1998, Fr. Ron was elected Regional Councilor for Canada, serving on the General Administration of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, in Rome, for six years. In August 2005, Fr. Ron became the President of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio Texas, a position he maintains to this day.

Father Rolheiser is in demand as a speaker and retreat facilitator. He has given numerous retreats for priests over the years.

In an interview with *America* magazine in 2014, Father responded to question about what he hoped people will take away from his ministry and writings: “I hope,” he said, “that my ministry and writings will help others see that faith and the church are credible and that they are inextricably connected to everything that is moving most deeply inside of us, our desires, our aching, our ambitions, our sexuality, even our most pagan and irreverent feelings, our ‘holy longing.’” He went on to say, “My hope is that my ministry and writing will help people personalize those deep truths so that, following the hungers and aching of their own hearts, they will find their way into faith, into our churches, and, most important, into a personal intimacy with Jesus.”

The **National Federation of Priests’ Councils** is a 501(3)c non-profit organization founded in 1968. Its mission is to serve the communion, brotherhood and solidarity of bishops, presbyterates, and priests. [www.nfpc.org]