



Pictured (left to right) Mr. Joseph J. Thomas, nominator, Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr. and Father James Gilmore, Pastor of St. Michael/St. Patrick Catholic Community, recipient of the Award for Outstanding Faith-based Organization

## **Outstanding Faith-Based Organization Award The Catholic Community of St. Michael and St. Patrick in Baltimore**

Nominated by Mr. Joseph Thomas.

Mr. Joseph Thomas wrote:

**St. Michel parish had been involved with the Hispanic community since the 1970's. In the early 90's the first Spanish-speaking pastor, Father Lavin arrived and put forth a tremendous effort to integrate the English and Spanish-speaking parishioners. After Father Lavin left St. Michael's, Father James Gilmore became the next Spanish-speaking pastor. He worked diligently to increase participation of all peoples in the catholic community. Currently the community is about 85-90% Spanish speaking.**

**English-speaking parishioners help integrate the Hispanics in the parish through home visits, distribution of flyers and bulletins to Hispanic stores and homes, and outreach for all peoples who are in need of food and clothing. Through St. Michael Outreach Center counseling is provided for abused women, documents are translated, English and computer skills are taught, clients are helped with their immigration problems, and the list goes on. The Assisi House at St. Patrick's distributes clothing to Hispanics in the South Broadway area.**

**In 2003 St. Patrick Church became fully Spanish-speaking with mass on Sunday morning and Wednesday evening. The church hall is used for social Hispanic events.**

**The clergy visit Hispanics in hospitals, nursing homes, and private homes to provide spiritual assistance. St. Michael also provides financial aid for schooling, the majority being Hispanic children.**

**Hispanics are now taking part in the administration of parish affairs, such as parish council, evangelization, carnivals, and luncheons. There is a Hispanic senior citizen luncheon held at St. Patrick Hall.**

**As an English-speaking member of this Community, I am proud to be part of this great adventure in welcoming the Hispanics here in Baltimore, as the parish welcomed my own German parents and grandparents.**