



Diocese of Duluth

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POPE NAMES NINTH BISHOP FOR DIOCESE OF DULUTH

His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI today named Father Paul Sirba, 49, the ninth bishop of the Diocese of Duluth.

Bishop-elect Sirba was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis in 1986. He is the son of Norbert (deceased) and Helen Sirba. He has two brothers, Father Joseph Sirba and John (Sue Ann) Sirba, and one sister Catherine (Scott) Kelly, 13 nieces and nephews, and three grand-nephews. He was raised in Bloomington, attended Nativity of Mary Grade School, the Academy of the Holy Angels, the College of St. Thomas and the Saint Paul Seminary. He received his Master of Divinity degree from Saint Paul Seminary and a Master of Arts degree in spiritual theology from the Notre Dame Apostolic Catechetical Institute in Arlington, VA. After his ordination, he served as associate pastor at St. Olaf Church in Minneapolis from 1986 to 1990 and at the Church of St. John the Baptist in Savage from 1990 to 1991, as a member of the spiritual formation department at St. John Vianney Seminary in St. Paul from 1991 to 2000, as pastor of Maternity of the Blessed Virgin in St. Paul from 2000 to 2006, and as spiritual director at the Saint Paul Seminary from 2006 to 2009. He was appointed vicar general and moderator of the curia for the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis by Archbishop John C. Nienstedt on July 1, 2009.

In the name of the priests, deacons, religious and faithful of the archdiocese, Archbishop John Nienstedt expressed their "collective joy in the Holy Father's appointment of Bishop-elect Paul Sirba to the Diocese of Duluth."

"Bishop-elect Sirba has been a priest of this Archdiocese for 23 years, and during that time, he has served with great distinction as a pastor, spiritual director at both our undergraduate and graduate seminaries, and more recently, as vicar general and moderator of the curia for the archdiocese," Archbishop Nienstedt said. "He is held in high esteem by the clergy of this local church. Along with his brother priests and the parishioners he has served, I greatly value his many valuable contributions to the building up of our Catholic faith here in St. Paul and Minneapolis. He will truly be missed. However, I also realize that he will not be far away, and I look forward to working with him in the Province."

Father James Bissonette, diocesan administrator of the Diocese of Duluth, welcomed the news on behalf of the diocese. "It is a great blessing to the Diocese of Duluth that our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI has sent us our next shepherd, Bishop-elect Paul Sirba," he said. "I have known Bishop-elect Sirba since our seminary days. I know him to be a very good man and a fine priest with a deep spirituality. It is a special joy that he comes to our diocese somewhat familiar with it, since he already knows many of the priests and his brother Father Joseph Sirba serves here as a pastor. I, together with the lay faithful, religious and clergy of the Diocese of Duluth, welcome our new bishop and look forward not only to his ordination and his installation but to assisting him in his new mission as our shepherd."

Bishop-elect Sirba will be available at a press conference at the diocesan Pastoral Center, 2830 E. Fourth Street, beginning at 3 p.m.