



Catholic Diocese of Saginaw

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 21, 2009

Pope names Saginaw's Bishop Carlson as the ninth Archbishop of Saint Louis

SAGINAW – Pope Benedict XVI announced today that he has selected Bishop Robert J. Carlson to become the ninth Archbishop of Saint Louis.

Carlson, 64, celebrated the 25th anniversary of his Episcopal ordination in January. He has served as the fifth bishop of the Diocese of Saginaw since 2005.

“I am grateful for having had the opportunity to worship, pray, and serve with the dedicated priests, religious, deacons, and lay faithful of the Diocese of Saginaw during the past four years,” Bishop Carlson said. “I have been privileged to call mid-Michigan home and blessed to have been a part of this dynamic and generous local church.”

Bishop Carlson will be introduced to the people of the Archdiocese of Saint Louis at a 10:30 a.m. CDT press conference there, where his predecessors include Archbishop Raymond L. Burke (2004 – 2008), who was made the Vatican's Prefect of the Apostolic Signatura in June 2008, and Cardinal Justin F. Rigali (1994 – 2003), who now serves as the Archbishop of Philadelphia.

The date of Bishop Carlson's installation in Saint Louis has not yet been determined. Until that time, the Archbishop-elect will continue to be the diocesan administrator in Saginaw.

The Archdiocese of Saint Louis was established as a diocese in 1826 and elevated to an archdiocese in 1847. The archdiocese is home to an estimated 566,000 Catholics worshipping in 189 parishes across 10 eastern Missouri counties.

During his four years in the Diocese of Saginaw, Bishop Carlson has focused on five priorities for ministry: vocations, Catholic Schools, service to the poor, stewardship, and evangelization.

When he arrived in Saginaw, the diocese had two seminarians discerning the vocation to the priesthood. During the past two years, more than 20 men have been enrolled as seminarians for the Diocese of Saginaw. Bishop Carlson has ordained eight priests since June 2007 and plans to ordain three more on June 5.

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Bishop Carlson established two significant charity events during his time in Saginaw: the Bishop's Charity Golf Classic and Bishop's Charity Ball. The Golf Classic has raised more than \$325,000 for seminarian education after three seasons and the Charity Ball has raised more than \$675,000 for Catholic schools and parish religious education programs in 2007 and 2008. The third annual Charity Ball to benefit Catholic education will take place at 6 p.m. on Friday, April 24, 2009 at the Horizons Conference Center in Saginaw.

Bishop Carlson also created the Saginaw Area Catholic Schools system to support schools in Saginaw County and established Blue Ribbon Commissions to help guide the Saginaw and Bay area school systems as well as Catholic schools in Midland.

In July 2006, Bishop Carlson set up the Catholic Community Foundation of Mid-Michigan to support the ministries of the diocese, its parishes and schools. More than \$4.5 million has been donated to the foundation since its inception.

Bishop Carlson also created the Mother Teresa Endowment Fund in October 2005 to assist struggling mothers awaiting the birth of a child. It has provided assistance to more than 375 families.

He also supported the Gospel of Life by providing Abortions Alternative Information Inc., with offices within the parish center of St. Mary Cathedral in order to continue its life-giving ministry and he has led hundreds of young people and adults to the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C. each January.

Other notable happenings during Bishop Carlson's time in Saginaw include the founding of the quarterly *FAITH Saginaw* magazine for evangelization and outreach in January 2007 and the diocesan Eucharistic Congress in the summer of 2007, which included a youth rally and concert in downtown Midland and 10-block Eucharistic procession in Bay City.

He also published six pastoral letters while Bishop of Saginaw: "Pastoral Letter on Evangelization" (Jan. 6, 2008); "Jesus Christ, the Divine Physician: Pastoral Letter on Penance" (Jan. 25, 2008); "Body and Soul: A reflection for couples called to the vocation of marriage on the 40th anniversary of *Humanae Vitae*" (July 25, 2008); "Preparing for the Nov. 4 General Election: On Abortion, Catholic Voters, and Proposal 2" (Oct. 28, 2008); "Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace: Pastoral Letter on Peace" (Dec. 12, 2008); and "The Liberating Power of this Sacrament: Instruction on Penance" (Lent 2009).

Bishop Carlson was born on June 30, 1944 in Minneapolis, Minn. He was ordained to the priesthood on May 23, 1979 for the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. On January 11, 1984 he was consecrated as an auxiliary bishop in his home archdiocese.

He was appointed as coadjutor bishop of the Diocese of Sioux Falls, S.D., in January 1994 and later succeeded Bishop Paul V. Dudley as the seventh bishop of Sioux Falls in March 1995.

In December 2004, Bishop Carlson was appointed to the Diocese of Saginaw by Pope John Paul II. He has served as the fifth bishop of Saginaw since his installation at the Cathedral of Mary of the Assumption in Saginaw on February 24, 2005.

The Diocese of Saginaw is home to an estimated 119,000 Catholics worshipping in 105 parish communities throughout Arenac, Bay, Clare, Gladwin, Gratiot, Huron, Isabella, Midland, Saginaw, Sanilac, and Tuscola counties.

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