



DIOCESE OF SIOUX CITY

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PRESS RELEASE

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The Holy Father Pope Francis has appointed Father John Edward Keehner, of the Diocese of Youngstown as the eighth bishop of the Diocese of Sioux City. A press conference introducing the bishop-elect was held this morning at the Central Catholic Offices in Sioux City.

Father Keehner, 59, is a native of Youngstown, Ohio, and is one of five children. He attended Austintown schools and graduated from Austintown Fitch High School in 1984.

Father Keehner earned a B.A. in English in 1988 from the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio. He then began studies at Mount St. Mary Seminary of the West in Cincinnati where he earned his M.Div. and M.A. in biblical studies in 1993.

He was ordained a priest in 1993 by Bishop James Malone at St. Columba Cathedral. His first assignment was parochial vicar for St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Boardman, Ohio. Father Keehner began canon law studies at the University of St. Thomas Aquinas (the Angelicum) in Rome and earned a licentiate in canon law in 1999. The priest was then assigned as a judge to the diocesan Department of Canonical Services.

He has served as vice rector and later rector of the St. Columba Cathedral, director of campus ministry at Youngstown State University. He has served as pastor of St. Casimir Parish, St. Christine Parish in Youngstown as well as St. Luke in Boardman, St. Paul in North Canton and Holy Spirit in Uniontown.

The bishop-elect currently serves as dean in Ashtabula County, Ohio, and is pastor of four parishes in the Diocese of Youngstown:

- Our Lady of Peace Parish in Ashtabula, Ohio
- Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Geneva, Ohio
- Corpus Christi Parish in Conneaut, Ohio
- St. Andrew Bobola Parish in Sheffield, Ohio

Father Keehner served as adjunct instructor of canon law at St. Mary Seminary in the Diocese of Cleveland from 2021-24.

In additional pastoral assignments, the bishop-elect has served on the diocesan board of religious education, priest council, board of mediation and arbitration for the Office of Conciliation, presbyteral council and the priest personnel board. Father Keehner has served as a spiritual director for the permanent diaconate.

The bishop-elect has served as state chaplain and national chaplain for the Ancient Order of Hibernians.

Father Keehner will be ordained as bishop of the Diocese of Sioux City May 1 at the Cathedral of the Epiphany in Sioux City.

Bishop Walker Nickless has served the Diocese of Sioux City since January 2006. He formally submitted his resignation and request for retirement to the Holy Father on May 28, 2022, on his 75th birthday, as is required of bishops by canon law (church law). His resignation is formally accepted with the Holy Father naming of Father Keehner as bishop-elect today.

Diocese of Sioux City statistics:

The Diocese of Sioux City is comprised of 24 counties in northwest Iowa. According to the latest statistics, there are 84,000 Catholics in the diocese, 37 parishes (many with multiple church locations) and 36 priests in active ministry. There are 15 Catholic school systems in the diocese.