



Most Reverend Robert W. Finn
Bishop
Diocese of Kansas City ~ St. Joseph

Welcome to Missouri: Archbishop Robert Carlson

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As I write this column, (Tuesday, April 21) the Vatican has just announced Pope Benedict XVI's appointment of Bishop Robert James Carlson as Archbishop of St. Louis.

Archbishop-Elect Carlson will be the tenth bishop and the ninth Archbishop of St. Louis. St. Louis is the "Metropolitan See" for Missouri. The Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph is one of three "suffragan" sees to St. Louis. In the Catholic Church, dioceses are arranged around Archdioceses. The Archbishop has certain responsibilities to call together the other bishops in his jurisdiction.

On June 27, 2008, Archbishop Raymond Burke was appointed Prefect of the Apostolic Signatura, the Church's "Supreme Court." This produced a vacancy in St. Louis, which will now be filled. At this writing I am not yet aware of the date of the installation of the new Archbishop, but I have communicated to him my fraternal best wishes and a promise of prayers from the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph.

Bishop Carlson is 64 years old, and has been a bishop for 25 years. He was installed as the fifth bishop of the Diocese of Saginaw on February 24, 2005. A native of Minneapolis, Minnesota, he was ordained to the priesthood on May 23, 1970 for the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. He was later ordained as an auxiliary bishop for his home archdiocese on January 11, 1984 and went on to serve as Bishop of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, from 1994 to 2005. He has degrees in Theology and Canon Law.

Within the U.S. Bishops' Conference, Bishop Carlson has chaired the Committees on Vocations, on Priestly Life and Ministry, and the USCCB Ad Hoc Committee on Youth, and the Ad Hoc Committee for the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. He has been a member of several other Committees.

His recent writings include Pastoral Letters on Peace (December, 2008); on Marriage at the 40th Anniversary of *Humanae Vitae* (July, 2008), and on The Sacrament of Penance, (January, 2008). Bishop Carlson is well known for his leadership in the Pro-Life movement, and for his success in increasing vocations in his dioceses.

He is leaving the Diocese of Saginaw in Michigan, which was established in 1938 by Pope Pius XI. Its territory includes 16 counties, carved out the Diocese of Grand Rapids and the Archdiocese of Detroit, in Michigan's "thumb and index finger." The recent Catholic Directory indicates that Saginaw has a Catholic population of about 120,000. The Archdiocese of St. Louis became a Diocese in 1826, and was raised to status as an Archdiocese in 1847. It has about 500,000 Catholics.

One of St. Louis' best known Archbishops was a Kansas City priest (born in Ireland). Cardinal John Glennon was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Kansas City in 1884. After serving as coadjutor to Bishop Hogan in Kansas City for almost 7 years, he was appointed Coadjutor-Archbishop and then Archbishop of St. Louis, where he served for 43 years.

We welcome Archbishop Robert Carlson to Missouri, and pray for him, and for faithful of the Diocese of Saginaw and the Archdiocese of St. Louis during this time of transition.