



Diocese of Salina

Office of the Bishop

103 N. Ninth
P.O. Box 980
Salina, Kansas 67402-0980

April 11, 2015

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This weekend Father Konrade will announce his transfer from St. Isidore's to pastor of St. Nicholas of Myra Parish in Hays. I trust this announcement comes to you with some surprise. Certainly Father Konrade has been a faithful and zealous pastor to you, is beloved in your community, and has not completed a full tenure. In light of those issues I am sending you this letter in order to help you understand my motivation behind this change in pastoral leadership.

The vast majority of Catholics today are well aware of the great shortage of priests. In our Diocese the median age is now in the mid 60s and we have experienced a decline in native clergy who can pastor our parishes. In an effort to maintain strong pastoral care for all our parishes we have taken several important steps, quite similar to what has happened across our nation. Notably, we have welcomed extern priests from other nations to work in our Diocese. This alone, however, is not sufficient to meet the needs of all our parishes. As I investigated other means of providing pastoral care for our people I discovered that the Chicago Province of the Dominican Order was open to a dialog about the possibility of coming to St. Isidore's Parish. The Dominicans have a long history of university chaplaincy work and a strong reputation for nurturing the faith among college students. Moreover, I strongly believe that the needs of St. Isidore's require two priests. In light of so many commitments and duties, the strain on a sole priest is heavy. The Dominican Province has generously offered to provide us two priests, Fr. Michael Demkovich, OP, and Fr. Robert Barry, OP, and I couldn't be more pleased to entrust pastoral care to this team. I also would note in passing that your future pastor, Fr. Demkovich, is an old friend, having earned his doctorate in theology at Louvain while I was a seminarian there. He is a published author, experienced University-level professor, and equally experienced in pastoral care. I hope you can see that I am excited about the good that I believe the Dominican Order can provide us in the years to come.

Please understand too that Father Konrade's talents and abilities have not gone unnoticed. Fr. Jarett, as noted above, has been a faithful and zealous pastor to you. St. Nicholas of Myra in Hays is a large parish, has many young families, and is looking at expanding the parish facilities. Too, Father Jarett's good work with university students will continue as he joins the staff at the Comeau Catholic Campus Center at Ft. Hays State University. I know the parishioners look forward to receiving him as their pastor, and the students at Ft. Hays State will be blessed by his energetic presence.

In closing, I kindly ask that you keep everyone involved in these transfers in your prayers. As St. Isidore's is indeed dear to my heart it is my intention to celebrate the Masses with you next weekend. Until then, I kindly ask your prayers for me as well.

Very sincerely yours in Christ Jesus,

Most Reverend Edward J. Weisenburger
Bishop of Salina