



DIOCESE OF DES MOINES

NEWS RELEASE

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Father William Joensen named 10th Bishop of the Diocese of Des Moines

Pope Francis today named Father William M. Joensen, Ph.D., a priest of the Archdiocese of Dubuque, as the 10th bishop for the Diocese of Des Moines. A news conference introducing Bishop-elect Joensen will be at 10 a.m. at the Catholic Pastoral Center, 601 Grand Ave. in Des Moines. It can be viewed live through the diocese's Facebook page: facebook.com/dmdiocese.

His ordination as a bishop and installation in the Diocese of Des Moines will be Friday, Sept. 27. Watch dmdiocese.org for details.

Bishop-elect Joensen, age 59, grew up in Ames, the oldest of five children born to the late Alfred W. Joensen and Marilyn E. (née Simington) Joensen. He attended Iowa State University, earned a bachelor's degree in zoology and was in medical school when he discerned a calling to the priesthood. He was ordained in 1989 and served in parish ministry for six years before beginning graduate studies in philosophy. Since returning to the Archdiocese of Dubuque, he has served at Loras College in Dubuque as a professor of philosophy and assisted at parishes in and around Dubuque.

"Today, our Holy Father Pope Francis gave voice to God's will by naming Father William Joensen as the next Bishop of the Diocese of Des Moines; and Father Bill said, 'Yes'" said Dubuque Archbishop Michael Jackels. "We are sad to lose Father Bill as a member of our presbyterate; he will be missed. Hopefully, the faithful of the Diocese of Des Moines will very soon come to appreciate the gift God is giving them in their new bishop."

Davenport Bishop Thomas Zinkula, a good friend of Bishop-elect Joensen, said, “Father Joensen will be a wonderful bishop and I am overjoyed that he was chosen to be the next bishop of the Diocese of Des Moines. I look forward to collaborating with him in the province of Iowa.”

Church law says that bishops must send their resignation (essentially a retirement letter) to the pope on their 75th birthday. Bishop Richard Pates, who has served the Des Moines diocese since 2008, turned 75 on Feb. 12, 2018. Bishops continue to serve until the Holy Father accepts their resignation, as Pope Francis announced today. Bishop Pates now serves as administrator of the diocese until Bishop-elect Joensen is ordained and installed as the bishop of the Diocese of Des Moines.

Upon his retirement, Bishop Pates will return to the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, where he will assist Archbishop Bernard Hebda in the pastoral service of students at St. Thomas Academy and Visitation Academy high schools as well as parishes and institutions in the archdiocese.

Bishop Pates will continue to be involved with boards of directors and other organizational activities.

“The Holy Father, Pope Francis, is sending a bishop with a pastoral heart to the Diocese of Des Moines,” Bishop Pates said. “Through Bishop-elect Joensen’s stellar personal gifts, the diocese will be well served in the years ahead. Heartfelt thanks are extended to Pope Francis for his solicitous care.”

The Diocese of Des Moines welcomes Bishop-elect Joensen.

The Diocese of Des Moines includes 80 parishes in 23 counties in central and southwest Iowa.