

Media Statement

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NOTICE TO AREA MEDIA
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Pope names Bishop Chad W. Zielinski as Bishop of Diocese of New Ulm

NEW ULM, MINNESOTA (July 12, 2022) - Pope Francis has named Bishop Chad W. Zielinski, 57, the fifth bishop of the Diocese of New Ulm. The announcement was made today by Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States. His installation is set for Tuesday, September 27, 2022.

On November 8, 2014, Pope Francis appointed Zielinski as bishop of the Diocese of Fairbanks in Alaska. As bishop of New Ulm, he succeeds Bishop John M. LeVoir, who led the diocese from July 14, 2008, until his retirement on August 6, 2020. Monsignor Douglas L. Grams has served as diocesan administrator since August 10, 2020.

“I am most grateful to our Holy Father for entrusting me to serve as the shepherd of the Diocese of New Ulm,” said Bishop Zielinski. “As I leave the vast expanse of Northern Alaska, I am fully aware of the countless blessings I received from 46 parishes. The faithful of the entire Diocese of Fairbanks patiently helped form me to be the shepherd I am today. Our Native Alaskan brothers and sisters have opened my mind and heart to the cultural beauty and richness of their traditional way of life. I come to the Diocese of New Ulm with the same open heart and mind, eager to learn and encounter new blessings as I visit parishes and families in this beautiful prairie land of south and west-central Minnesota. Guided by the Holy Spirit, together we continue our journey of faith into a new era of peace filled with hope in Jesus Christ.”

Chad William Zielinski was born on September 8, 1964, in Detroit and grew up on a farm in Alpena in the Diocese of Gaylord, Michigan. He is the eldest of five children of Donald and Linda Zielinski. After graduating from Alpena High School in 1982, he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force and, while stationed in Idaho, attended Boise State College and Park College. At this time, he felt a call to serve God as a priest. Having completed his tour of duty in 1986, he entered Mount Angel Seminary in St. Benedict, Oregon, where he earned a bachelor's degree with honors in Philosophy in 1989. He was accepted as a seminarian

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for the Diocese of Gaylord and entered Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit to complete his spiritual formation and theological studies, receiving his Master of Divinity degree in 1996. He was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Patrick R. Cooney at St. Mary Cathedral in Gaylord on June 8, 1996.

After ordination, he served as associate pastor for Immaculate Conception Parish in Traverse City and, in 1998, became pastor of St. Philip Neri Parish in Empire and St. Rita-St. Joseph in Maple City. He was elected to serve on the presbyteral council in 1999 and became pastor for administrative affairs of the diocesan mission to Hispanics in 2000.

Following the terrorist attacks of 2001, Father Zielinski felt a strong need to minister to those in military service. Aware of the great need for Catholic military chaplains, Bishop Cooney released him to serve in the Archdiocese for the Military Services. In 2002, he began his chaplaincy at Grand Forks Air Force Base in North Dakota. From 2003 to 2005, he was stationed in Suffolk, England, before returning to the United States, where he was assigned to HQ Air Force Recruiting Service at Randolph Air Force Base in Schertz, Texas. In 2009, he was appointed Roman Catholic Cadet Chaplain at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado. In 2012 he served as Chaplain to the 354th Fighter Wing at Eielson Air Force Base in Fairbanks. On December 15, 2014, he was ordained and installed as the sixth bishop of the Diocese of Fairbanks, Alaska, by Archbishop Roger L. Schwietz.

Upon receiving the news of Bishop Zielinski's appointment, diocesan administrator Monsignor Douglas L. Grams stated, "It is with great joy that I received the news of Bishop Zielinski's appointment to the Diocese of New Ulm. The bishop brings pastoral experience and is known for his humility and compassion as a shepherd."

Overview of the Diocese of New Ulm.

Established on November 18, 1957, the Diocese of New Ulm is home to nearly 48,201 Catholics. Considered one of the most rural dioceses in the country, it is comprised of 15 counties in south and west-central Minnesota. There are currently 59 parishes, served by 32 assigned diocesan priests, 17 permanent deacons, 13 Catholic elementary schools, and three Catholic high schools. For further information visit www.dnu.org.

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NOTE TO MEDIA: Monsignor Douglas L. Grams, diocesan administrator, will introduce Bishop Zielinski during a media conference today at 1:30 p.m. at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, 605 N. State Street in New Ulm. **Please contact the Office of Communications, (507) 233-5332 or cclancy@dnu.org if you plan to attend.** The media conference will be live-streamed at www.dnu.org.

Photo: An electronic photo of Bishop Zielinski is available on the Diocese of New Ulm website at www.dnu.org.