News



Father Michel J. Mulloy, diocesan administrator of the Diocese of Rapid City, S.D., is pictured in this undated photo. Pope Francis appointed the priest to head the Diocese of Duluth, Minn., June 19, 2020. (CNS/courtesy West River Catholic)

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Father Michel J. Mulloy, diocesan administrator of the Diocese of Rapid City, S.D., is pictured in this undated photo. Pope Francis appointed the priest to head the Diocese of Duluth, Minn., June 19, 2020. (CNS/courtesy West River Catholic)

Pope Francis has appointed Fr. Michel J. Mulloy, diocesan administrator of the Diocese of Rapid City, South Dakota, as the bishop of the Diocese of Duluth, Minnesota.

Duluth has not had a bishop since Bishop Paul D. Sirba died Dec. 1, 2019, at age 59. He suffered cardiac arrest and was rushed to the hospital where lifesaving measures were unsuccessful.

Bishop-designate Mulloy, 67, is a native of Mobridge, South Dakota. He was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, June 8, 1979, and incardinated into the Diocese of Rapid City in 1986 after being on loan to the diocese for a few years for parish ministry.

His appointment as bishop was announced June 19 in Washington by Archbishop Christophe Pierre, the Vatican nuncio to the United States.

His episcopal ordination and installation have been set for Oct. 1.

"With great joy and gratitude to Pope Francis," Archbishop Bernard A. Hebda of St. Paul and Minneapolis congratulated Bishop-designate Mulloy on his appointment. "I very much look forward to collaborating with him as he joins the bishops of our state," he added.

"I have come to know him in his great work as diocesan administrator of the Diocese of Rapid City and am confident that he will be a faithful servant and shepherd to the people of northeastern Minnesota, building on the ministry of Bishop Paul Sirba," Hebda said.

Michel Joseph Mulloy was born May 20, 1953, in Mobridge, South Dakota, to Silvin and Ethel Mulloy. Michel joined one brother, Colin Dean, and two sisters, Madonna and Roxan. His older brother Llewellen died at birth. He grew up attending St. Joseph Catholic Church and the public school in Mobridge. His dad was a mechanic and car dealer, and his mother cared for the home and assisted her husband with bookkeeping.

In 1967, Michel's mother died of an aneurysm. His father moved with Michel's brother to Keystone, South Dakota, in the Black Hills in 1968, where he met and married Amelia (Babe) Cordes.

That same year, Michel entered the minor seminary at O'Gorman High School in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, as a sophomore. Michel attended what is now St. Mary's University of Minnesota and Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary in Winona, Minnesota. He graduated in 1975 with a bachelor of arts in classical humanities.

From 1975 to 1979, Michel attended St. Paul Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, for theology, the archdiocese's graduate-level seminary, which has graduated 33 other priests later ordained bishops, among them Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, a candidate for sainthood.

After Bishop-designate Mulloy was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Sioux Falls in 1979, he served in parishes in both the Sioux Falls and Rapid City dioceses before being formally incardinated in the Rapid City Diocese.

He has served as the Rapid City diocese's vocations director and director of its Office of Worship. He has also served on its priests' council, college of consultors, diocesan finance and pastoral councils, and the Sioux Spiritual Center Board of Directors.

In 2017, Bishop-designate Mulloy became the full-time vicar general of the diocese and returned to Rapid City. In 2019, he was elected diocesan administrator when Bishop Robert D. Gruss was named bishop of Saginaw, Michigan.

On May 12, 2020, Francis named Fr. Peter M. Muhich, rector of the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Rosary in Duluth, to be the new bishop of Rapid City, South Dakota. The date of Bishop-designate Muhich's ordination and installation have not yet been set.

Mulloy is close to his immediate family and his extended family with cousins living throughout the country. His brother Colin died in 2003. His father and stepmother are also deceased. Colin's two daughters and two granddaughters live in San Diego.

His sister Roxan lives in Rugby, North Dakota. She has two daughters and four grandchildren. His sister Madonna and her husband, Allen, live in Milliken, Colorado. They have two sons and a daughter and 14 grandchildren.

The Diocese of Duluth covers 22,354 square miles and has a total population of 447,896 of which 45,283 are Catholic.

(Contributing to this story was Maria Wiering, editor of The Catholic Spirit, newspaper of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.)

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