



The Diocese of Knoxville

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MEDIA ADVISORY
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Cathedral of Most Sacred Heart of Jesus dedication Saturday

Pope Francis' diplomatic representative among attendees this weekend

KNOXVILLE--- The Cathedral of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, the long-anticipated new mother church of the Diocese of Knoxville, will be dedicated at noon Saturday, March 3, in a special Mass celebrated by Bishop Richard F. Stika.

More than a thousand people will be in attendance for this historic celebration and Rite of Dedication, including leaders of the Catholic Church representing the Vatican, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and more than a dozen archdioceses, dioceses, and Catholic communities as well as faithful from the Diocese of Knoxville's 51 parishes and Catholic missions.

The Mass marks the official opening of the Diocese of Knoxville's first dedicated cathedral, located at 711 S. Northshore Drive in Knoxville. It will replace the current Sacred Heart Cathedral, built in 1955 and opened in 1956. Sacred Heart served as a parish church from Jan. 1, 1956, until Pope St. John Paul II established the Diocese of Knoxville in 1988 and then elevated Sacred Heart to a cathedral. The old cathedral building will be converted into a parish fellowship hall.

Joining Bishop Stika for the Dedication Mass will be Cardinal Justin Rigali, Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz, Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, Cardinal William Levada, and Cardinal Timothy Dolan. Among the archbishops and bishops attending will be Archbishop Christophe Pierre, Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz, Archbishop John Myers, Bishop James V. Johnston Jr., and the new leaders of the dioceses of Memphis and Nashville.

■ **Cardinal Rigali** is archbishop emeritus of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia who now is in residence in the Diocese of Knoxville. His Eminence also has served as archbishop of the Archdiocese of St. Louis and worked closely for years with Pope St. John Paul II during his papacy as secretary of the Congregation of Bishops and as Secretary of the College of Cardinals. Cardinal Rigali has served six popes since his ordination to the priesthood in 1961.

■ **Cardinal Dziwisz** (Jee-vish) served as personal secretary to Pope St. John Paul II during the pope's 27-year papacy, traveling with the pope on his historic trips around the world. Cardinal Dziwisz was seated with St. John Paul II when the pope was shot during a 1981 assassination attempt. The archbishop emeritus of the Archdiocese of Krakow,

Poland, also was with St. John Paul II when the pope died in 2005. He administered the sacrament of the anointing of the sick to the pope just before he died.

■ **Cardinal DiNardo** is archbishop of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston who also serves as president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the episcopal conference of the Catholic Church in the United States of which every U.S. bishop is a member. He was created a cardinal in 2007 by Pope Benedict XVI.

■ **Cardinal Levada** served as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith under Pope Benedict XVI and was the highest-ranking American in the Vatican administration at that time. As prefect, he was the Catholic Church's chief theologian from May 2005 to June 2012. Cardinal Levada, who has served as archbishop of the Archdioceses of Portland and San Francisco, also has served six popes since his ordination to the priesthood in 1961.

■ **Cardinal Dolan** is the archbishop of the Archdiocese of New York, the second-largest diocese in the United States. Cardinal Dolan also is a former president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, having served in that role from 2010 to 2013. Previously, he has served as archbishop of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and as auxiliary bishop of St. Louis. Time Magazine named Cardinal Dolan, who frequently appears in the media as a commentator on Catholicism, one of the "100 Most Influential People in the World" for 2012.

■ **Archbishop Christophe Pierre** is the **Vatican's top diplomatic ambassador to the United States**. As the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Pierre represents Pope Francis and the Holy See on Catholic Church matters involving the United States, serving as the top liaison between the Vatican and the U.S. Catholic Church.

■ **Archbishop Kurtz** was the second bishop of the Diocese of Knoxville, serving from 1999 to 2007, when he was appointed by Pope Benedict XVI as the fourth archbishop of the Archdiocese of Louisville on Aug. 15, 2007. He also served as the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops from 2013-2016.

Among the fellow bishops joining Bishop Stika for the dedication are:

■ **Bishop Johnston**, a Knoxville native and former priest of the Diocese of Knoxville who also served as chancellor of the diocese for then-Bishop Kurtz. In 2008, Pope Benedict XVI appointed Bishop Johnston as the sixth bishop of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, Mo. In 2015, Pope Francis named Bishop Johnston the seventh bishop of Kansas City-St. Joseph, Mo.

■ The bishops of the Archdiocese of Louisville province: Bishop Roger J. Foys of the Diocese of Covington; Bishop William Medley of the Diocese of Owensboro; Bishop John Stowe, OFM Conv., of the Diocese of Lexington; Bishop Martin Holley of the Diocese of Memphis, who was installed in 2016 as the fifth bishop of Memphis; and Bishop Mark Spalding of the Diocese of Nashville, who was installed in February as the 12th bishop of Nashville.

The March 3 Dedication Mass completes a three-year cathedral construction project that began on April 19, 2015, when Bishop Stika broke ground from the controls of a Caterpillar backhoe. Bishop Stika named Father David Boettner, a Diocese of Knoxville vicar general and rector of the Cathedral of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, to oversee the project for the diocese. Father Boettner worked with McCrery Architects of Washington, D.C., BarberMcMurry Architects of Knoxville, and Knoxville general contractor Merit Construction in developing the cathedral.

Over the course of construction, more the 35 subcontractors employing hundreds of men and women worked on the project under Merit Construction.