Mt. Vernon native and former local priest returns home to lead Dubuque Archdiocese

Dubuque, Iowa – Pope Francis has appointed Most Reverend Thomas R. Zinkula, Bishop of Davenport, as Archbishop of Dubuque. Archbishop-elect Zinkula is scheduled to be installed as the archdiocese’s eleventh archbishop on Wednesday, October 18.

The Most Rev. Richard E. Pates, Bishop Emeritus of Des Moines, has served as Apostolic Administrator of the archdiocese since April 4 and will continue in that role until Archbishop-elect Zinkula’s installation.

Archbishop-elect Zinkula was born April 19, 1957 and grew up on a farm outside of Mt. Vernon, Iowa. He graduated from Cornell College in Mt. Vernon with an undergraduate degree in mathematics, economics and business. He received his law degree from the University of Iowa College of Law in 1983. He attended Catholic University in Washington, DC, where he earned a master’s degree in theology in 1990 and was ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of Dubuque the same year. In 1998, he received a licentiate in Canon Law from St. Paul’s University, Ottawa, Canada. Pope Francis appointed him Bishop of Davenport on April 19, 2017.

Bishop Richard Pates, Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese took note, "Pope Francis has blessed the Archdiocese of Dubuque with a native son. Archbishop Zinkula is very beloved in the archdiocesan community and will exercise service and leadership that will draw Church members closer in their vital mission."

Archbishop-elect Zinkula’s past archdiocesan assignments saw him serving faith communities in Dubuque, Rickardsville, Balltown, Sherrill, Holy Cross, Luxemburg, and Cedar Rapids. He also served as judge and judicial vicar for the Archdiocesan Metropolitan Tribunal, and rector for St. Pius X Seminary in Dubuque.

Archbishop-elect Zinkula reflected upon his appointment to Dubuque in a statement, saying, “Although I will be sad to leave the Diocese of Davenport in a couple of months, where the diocesan community taught me how to be a bishop and we walked together on our common faith journey, I am humbled and overjoyed to receive the appointment to return to my home diocese to serve as the eleventh archbishop of the Archdiocese of Dubuque.”

Archbishop-elect Zinkula’s Curriculum Vitae.
The Archdiocese of Dubuque encompasses 17,403 square miles throughout 30 counties in North Central and Northeast Iowa. The Archdiocese of Dubuque has a population of roughly 1,013,000 of which 183,586, or roughly 18 percent, are Catholic. Pope Gregory XVI created the Dubuque Diocese on July 28, 1837.

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