

From Bishop Michael J. Hoeppner, April 13, 2021

Dear Christ's Faithful of the Diocese of Crookston,

Pope Francis has asked for and accepted my resignation as Bishop of Crookston. My resignation comes as a result of the investigation into reports that I, "...at times, failed to observe applicable norms when presented with allegations of sexual abuse involving clergy of the Diocese of Crookston." The Church describes the ministry of a diocesan bishop as teaching, sanctifying and governing. It has been a joy and a blessing for me to have served as your bishop for the past 13+ years. I apologize to you, as I have apologized to our Holy Father, for my failures in governing as bishop.

At the same time, I hold dear the many good things and blessings that God has showered upon us these past years. I have enjoyed sharing with you the teaching of the Church in articles, presentations, and homilies. In our world of today where so many are confused about so many things, it is important that the truth of the Gospel and the Church's Tradition be clearly presented for all to hear. I have enjoyed celebrating the Sacraments in the many wonderful parishes throughout our diocese. I have especially enjoyed the Confirmations—hundreds each year— and the Ordinations and the Chrism Masses. Governing involves providing vision and direction and the Second Synod of Crookston and its resulting pastoral letter *Meeting Christ – Living Christ* provided a solid vision and direction in my first years here. More recently, the vision has come as a result of Pope Francis' encyclical *The Joy of the Gospel* and the joint convocation we held with the Diocese of Fargo. We have been and continue to be actively engaged in the work of forming missionary disciples, faith-filled disciples who are fully alive in the mission Jesus has given us, the task of evangelization and re-evangelization.

I want to thank all the wonderful people with whom I have had the privilege to work these years: my brother priests, our deacons, the religious and lay faithful. I especially thank the members of the diocesan curia and diocesan staff. It has been a delight to come to work each day and engage with such wonderful, dedicated people in the work of the Church. I thank Bishop Balke for his continuing friendship and support. Too, I thank Bishop Richard Pates for his willingness to become Apostolic Administrator and watch over you until a new ordinary is appointed. And I thank you, all the faithful of the Diocese of Crookston. I have always told others: "the faith-life is strong here." It is seen so beautifully lived out in family life, in involvement in parish life, in your desire to grow in the knowledge of the faith, and in your love for one another and those in need. It is seen, too, in the financial support you give to the Church here and abroad. Thanks to your continued support, the Diocese of Crookston is today financially healthy.

What will I do next? Well, for the past few years, my sister Mary has been looking to move out of Minnesota to a place where "it isn't so cold and snowy!" I always told her that when I retired I would join her in that warmer place. And so, that is the plan for my immediate future. I will join her and move out of state to a warmer climate. I look forward to returning to Crookston for personal visits and will await the appointment of a new bishop here to determine other activity.

When we bishops of Minnesota have been involved in meetings with others and we have been asked to state who we are and where we serve, I have often said: "I am Bishop Hoeppner from

Crookston, the premiere diocese of Minnesota.” You who are the local Church of Crookston, will always be the premiere diocese for me. You have heard me say, and it is true, “I am a blessed bishop.” And, it is as true today as the day I said it at my ordination as your bishop, “you have a bishop who loves you.” Be assured, I will continue to keep you all in my prayers each day. May God continue to be with you and bless you always.

Sincerely, in the name of the Lord Jesus,

Most Rev. Michael J. Hoeppner
7th Bishop of Crookston