

**Catholic Pastoral Center**

August 6, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In light of my current health concerns, Pope Francis has accepted my request for early retirement as bishop of New Ulm, which became effective August 6.

Since early July, I have been undergoing a physical and psychological assessment at Sacred Heart Mercy Health Care Center in Alma, Mich., operated by the Religious Sisters of Mercy. The assessment indicates that I need a therapy plan to treat my conditions. I will remain in Alma until early September to undertake a therapy plan that I can continue to follow when I return home.

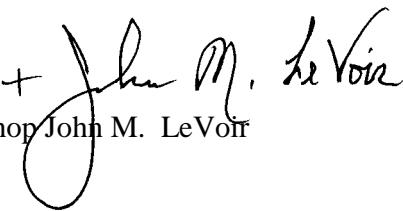
The Diocese of New Ulm is now considered a vacant See, i.e., (without a bishop) until the Holy Father makes a new appointment. There is no timeline for appointing a new bishop. However, the search for a replacement will begin immediately, a process run primarily by the Vatican.

According to the Code of Canon Law, when the bishop of a diocese vacates his office, and no simultaneous appointment is made by the Pope to fill the office, a diocesan administrator is elected by the diocesan College of Consultors to govern the diocese. The diocesan administrator is elected from the active priests of our diocese and is at least 35 years of age. Once he accepts the election, he holds the power of a bishop until the Pope appoints a new bishop. This announcement will be made once the College of Consultors meets, which will be soon.

It has been 12 years since I was appointed bishop of New Ulm by Pope Benedict, XVI, on July 14, 2008.

Although these last years have been very challenging for our diocese and the life of the Church, it has been a privilege to have served you. Serving as your bishop has been a great honor and an enriching experience as I have come to know many people throughout this local Church. It would not have been possible to serve as your shepherd without your continued support, cooperation, and prayers. Please continue to deepen your love for Jesus Christ, to be willing to share your Catholic faith, and increase your concern for the less fortunate. I ask for your prayers for my health, and I will remember you in mine. I pray that the Holy Spirit guides the process of choosing a new bishop for the Diocese of New Ulm.

In Christ,

  
Bishop John M. LeVoir

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