



Diocese of Davenport

News For Immediate Release

DATE: May 26, 2011
FROM: Deacon David Montgomery
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RE: Pope Names Msgr. Robert D. Gruss as Bishop of Rapid City

Note: Bishop-designate Gruss will not be available for interviews until the morning of Monday May 30. You may contact him at Sacred Heart Cathedral, 563-324-3257. Bishop Martin Amos will also be unavailable until the afternoon of Tuesday May 31. You may contact him at the St. Vincent Center, 563-324-1911.

Pope Benedict XVI has named Rev. Msgr. Robert D. Gruss, 55, pastor of Sacred Heart Cathedral in the Diocese of Davenport, as the Bishop of the Diocese of Rapid City.

Bishop-designate Gruss will become the 8th Bishop of the Diocese of Rapid City which serves more than 30,000 Catholics and 82 congregations throughout western South Dakota. Thirteen percent of the total population is Catholic. Twenty-seven percent of the Catholics are Native American and ten percent are Hispanic.

In response to the announcement from the Holy See, Bishop Martin Amos of Davenport said, "As a bishop when I install a new pastor for a parish, one of the final things I say to him is "My brother, be a loving father, a gentle shepherd and a wise teacher." I pray that Bishop-designate Gruss will be that for the people of the Diocese of Rapid City....a loving father, a gentle shepherd and a wise teacher. I join my prayers to the people of the Diocese of Davenport and the people of the Diocese of Rapid City for God's blessings upon him as he begins this new ministry."

Bishop-designate Gruss said, "It is with deep humility and gratitude that I have accepted the Holy Father's appointment as the next bishop of the Diocese of Rapid City. While it all seems a bit overwhelming at the moment, I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to serve God, the Church and the people of this diocese."

Robert D. Gruss was born on June 25, 1955 in Texarkana, AK. He holds an Associate Degree in Civil Engineering from Madison Area Technical College, Madison, WI, a BA in Theology from St. Ambrose University, a STB from the University of St. Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum), Rome, Italy, and an MA in Spiritual Theology from the University of St. Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum), Rome, Italy.

Before entering the seminary, he earned his commercial pilot's license (instrument rating and multi-engine rating) from the Spartan School of Aeronautics, Tulsa, OK. He worked for various companies as a charter pilot, flight instructor and corporate pilot.

Bishop-designate Gruss was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Davenport in 1994 following his seminary formation at the Pontifical North American College, Vatican City. He has also completed spiritual direction training from the Institute for Priestly Formation.

After ordination to the priesthood he was named parochial vicar of St. Paul the Apostle Church,



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Davenport, IA. Subsequent assignments include: parochial vicar, St. Anthony Church, Knoxville; St. Mary Church, Pella; Sacred Heart Church, Melcher; pastor of St. Mary Church, Pella; Director of Vocations; Chancellor; Director of the Propagation of the Faith; Director of Victim Assistance Program; Vice Rector of the Pontifical North American College and Director of Human Formation, Vatican City; and Rector and Pastor of Sacred Heart Cathedral, Davenport. Bishop-designate Gruss was awarded the Chaplain of His Holiness with the title "Monsignor" in August 2007.

Description of the Diocese of Rapid City, South Dakota

The Diocese of Rapid City encompasses 43,000 square miles in western South Dakota with a population of more than 227,000 people. The largest city in the diocese is Rapid City, with approximately 67,500 people. The prairies of the diocese are scattered with farms and ranches and small towns. The Black Hills mountain range runs along the western edge of the diocese. Most of the priests travel long distances to serve two or three parishes. Currently, 30 diocesan priests, 13 religious order priests, and 28 deacons serve 82 Catholic congregations in the diocese. There are also 23 religious women and two religious brothers serving in the diocese.

There are five Indian reservations within the diocese. The counties within the reservations include five of the poorest eleven counties in the U.S.A. Because of the poverty, the indigenous people experience many social ills such as high dropout rates in school, substance abuse, and suicide rates far exceeding national averages. The northern Reservations of Standing Rock and Cheyenne River are served by diocesan priests, while the Jesuits serve the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations in the south. Priests of the Sacred Heart of Jesus serve the people on the Lower Brule Reservation which borders the Missouri River.

Programs in the diocese include a diocesan newspaper, Catholic Social Services, and the Sioux Spiritual Center, a retreat center for ministry formation participants staffed by Jesuits. Catholic Schools include the Rapid City Catholic School System (K-12) with 800 students, and two schools on the Pine Ridge Reservation: Red Cloud Indian School (K-12) with 600 students and Our Lady of Lourdes (K-8) with 150 students.

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