



DIOCESE *of* LACROSSE  
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

**Date: March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

## **Pope Francis Accepts Bishop William Patrick Callahan's Retirement and Appoints Bishop Gerard Battersby as Bishop for the Diocese of La Crosse**

**La Crosse, WI.** Pope Francis announced this morning that he accepted Bishop William Patrick Callahan's retirement request and appointed Bishop Gerard Battersby to succeed Bishop Callahan and serve as the 11th Bishop of the Diocese of La Crosse.

*"It is with joy that I received the news that the Holy Father had named me the 11th Bishop of the Diocese of La Crosse, Wisconsin," Bishop Battersby said. "When I was baptized, ordained a priest and consecrated a bishop, I received a call within a call, an invitation to follow. The Risen One has bid me to follow him to western Wisconsin, to the banks of the mighty Mississippi. I leave with hope and anticipatory joy."*

[Bishop Battersby](#) was born on May 15th, 1960. In 1993, he entered Sacred Heart Major Seminary and received a Master of Divinity degree in 1998. After ordination to the priesthood, he served in parish ministry for ten years. Bishop Battersby then served as director of graduate seminarians and graduate pastoral formation at Sacred Heart Major Seminary, Detroit. In 2011, he was appointed Vice-Rector and Dean of Seminary Formation and was ordained to the Episcopacy as an Auxiliary Bishop of Detroit and Moderator of the South Region in January 2017.

*“I have had the privilege of serving as a bishop in west-central Wisconsin for fourteen years,” said Bishop Callahan. “During this time, I have been blessed with numerous wonderful memories. I am grateful for the meaningful prayers and reflections that have connected my heart and soul with joy and gratitude and I am especially thankful for the three years I spent serving in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, where I received fraternity and support from Cardinal Tim Dolan, Archbishop Jerry ListECKI and the Milwaukee presbyterate. In 2010, I was called by His Holiness, Pope Benedict, to become the Tenth Bishop of La Crosse and I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to work with some of the best priests and deacons in the Church in this capacity.*

*“Throughout my ministry, I have been fortunate to have the steadfast support of my Franciscan community since I was ordained as a priest in 1977. Looking back, it is a great blessing and I simply say, 'thank you' to all the wonderful people who have been part of my journey, especially the priests, deacons, religious, and holy women who have been so kind to me over these 14 years. Their friendship and mentorship have taught me to be mindful of what it means to be brothers and sisters of Christ and sons and daughters of God.*

*“As I move forward, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has made my time in the Diocese of La Crosse so meaningful. I look forward to continuing my service to Bishop Battersby and spiritual service to brother priests and deacons in La Crosse. I am grateful for the opportunity to remain in this wonderful community for as long as God allows, and I will cherish the memories and experiences I have had here. Thank you for allowing me to fulfill God's call among you. Be assured of my daily prayer and happy memories.”*

Bishop Battersby will be installed as the Bishop of the Diocese of La Crosse on May 20th at the [Cathedral of St. Joseph the Workman](#).

Called by Jesus Christ to “Seek first the kingdom of God,” the Diocese of La Crosse spans 19 beautiful counties across west-central Wisconsin. 156 parishes serve a total population of 875,000 souls, of whom 135,000 are Catholic. Committed Catholic teachers, staff and administrators serve the more than 6,500 Catholic school students enrolled in seven Catholic high schools and 58 other

Catholic K-8 schools within the diocese. [Our diocesan history](#) is a story of diverse populations united by their love of God and includes several faith heroes on the path to sainthood.

The Holy Cross Diocesan Center is located at 3710 East Ave S in La Crosse. The press conference will start promptly at 10:30 am, and the press are welcome to attend. Please RSVP with Erik (contact information below – email preferred) to ensure building access. After being introduced by Very Rev. William Dhein, [Bishop Callahan](#) will offer an opening prayer, share remarks and introduce Bishop Battersby. Bishop Battersby will greet the assembled press and community, share his remarks and open the floor for a brief questions and answers session. Background and supporting information are located within the hyperlinks above. The press conference will be available via live stream on the [diocesan YouTube channel](#) and also located at the QR code to the right. Contact Erik for assistance if any additional information is needed/helpful.



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[How Bishops Are Selected](#)