



NEWS ARCHIVE:

Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon

Editor: Kiply Lukan Yaworski, Communications
Phone: 306-242-1500; Toll Free: 1-877-661-5005
communications@saskatoonrcdiocese.com

Msgr. Don Bolen appointed bishop of Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Glad tidings for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon arrived a few days before Christmas with the appointment of Msgr. Donald Bolen of Regina as seventh bishop of the diocese.

Pope Benedict XVI's appointment of Bolen as bishop was announced Dec. 21 in Rome. The diocese of Saskatoon has been without a bishop since September, when former bishop Albert LeGatt was inaugurated as Archbishop of St. Boniface, Manitoba.

Bolen, 48, is presently serving as vicar-general of the Archdiocese of Regina, and pastor of St. Joseph parish, Balgonie; St. Agnes at Pilot Butte; and St. Peter's Colony, Kronau.

Bolen is also the chair of the Archdiocesan Ecumenical Commission, a position that reflects his strong background in ecumenical study and service, including seven years serving in Rome on the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, from 2001 to 2008.



**Msgr. Don Bolen,
Bishop Elect
Diocese of Saskatoon**

“The announcement of the appointment of Bishop-elect Bolen to the diocese of Saskatoon brought me the joy one experiences when two of your best friends get to meet each other,” said Archbishop James Weisgerber of Winnipeg, a former bishop of Saskatoon, and a former pastor of Bolen's. “Saskatoon is a wonderful Church, vibrant, generous, alive, and Don Bolen is a wonderful person, intelligent, faith-filled, deeply human. This is a marriage literally made in heaven.”

Saskatoon Diocesan Administrator Rev. Ron Beechinor said the appointment of Bolen is great news for the diocese of Saskatoon. “The Lord has done great things for us. We are filled with joy,” Beechinor said. “We are very fortunate. It's a wonderful appointment.”

In choosing Bolen to be bishop of Saskatoon, the Holy Father has selected a gracious and deeply spiritual leader, said Archbishop Daniel Bohan of the Archdiocese of Regina.

CONTINUED ...



“Msgr. Bolen has been truly generous in his service to the Church both in his home archdiocese of Regina and at the level of the universal Church in his years with the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity in Rome,” Bohan said. “I am confident will be welcomed gladly by the people of the diocese of Saskatoon. He will leave Regina with our warm congratulations and prayers.”

Cardinal Walter Kasper, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity greeted the news of Bolen’s appointment with “great joy and profound thankfulness” noting that Bolen’s strong faith in Christ, together with his vision and energy will equip him to lead his new flock in the diocese of Saskatoon.

Bolen said that he is honoured and humbled by the appointment, which brings with it many mixed feelings.

“I have heard wonderful things about the Diocese of Saskatoon, and while it is going to take a little while to get my mind around all that is involved in being a bishop, it will be a great privilege to serve there, and I look forward to all that lies ahead,” he said.

“At the same time, I am saddened at the thought of leaving the parishes of Balgonie, Pilot Butte and St. Peter’s Colony, and the generous and welcoming people of those faith communities. Likewise, the Archdiocese of Regina, its archbishops, priests and faithful, have nurtured my priesthood, giving me a home, constant support, and endless opportunities to learn and to serve. I treasure the many friendships in Christ which have nurtured me there and which I will carry with me.”

Bolen’s priestly, academic and ecumenical work has been marked by a passionate concern for Christianity’s dialogue with contemporary culture, and the need to “give an account of the hope that is within us as Christian community “ (1 Peter 3:15).

“Many in our day struggle with doubts, and there are no shortage of external challenges to our faith. But God is faithful, and the Holy Spirit is moving us to rediscover old and chart out new ways to give an intelligent, articulate and convincing account of our hope, our faith,” said Bolen.

The son of Joseph and Rose Bolen, Donald Bolen spent the first years of his life on a farm in a German Catholic area west of Gravelbourg. The family moved into the town of Gravelbourg after the death of his father in 1968, when Donald was seven years old.

CONTINUED



After high school he studied English and Religious Studies at Campion College at the University of Regina, completing a BA Honours in 1982.

In 1986 he entered Saint Paul Seminary in Ottawa for the Archdiocese of Regina, eventually completing a B.Th., M.Th. and L.Th. through Saint Paul University. He was ordained to the priesthood Oct. 12, 1991.

In September 1994 he began doctoral studies at Oxford University in England, exploring theology of the agreed statements of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission. Before he could finish the thesis, he was asked to take up a teaching post at Campion College, and was subsequently appointed to the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity for a five-year period 2001-2006, which was eventually extended to 2008, working in the area of relations with the Anglican Communion and World Methodist Council.

“Without doubt, the research into Anglican - Roman Catholic relations which was carried out at Oxford has been put to good use in my work in Rome, and I had the privilege of serving on the dialogue commission which was the subject of my research,” says Bolen.

In November, 2008 Bolen was awarded the Cross of Saint Augustine by the Archbishop of Canterbury for his service to relations between the Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion.

Bolen’s ministry assignments in the Archdiocese of Regina have included associate pastor at St. John the Baptist Parish in Estevan, administrator at Church of Our Lady, Moose Jaw, as well as at parishes in Milestone and Lang; and priest moderator of Paroisse St. Jean Baptiste, Regina. He has served as a faculty member in the department of Religious Studies at Campion College, teaching courses in Christology, Contemporary Christianity, and Ecumenical Dialogue, as well as an introductory courses in Religious Studies, and Religious Studies Methodology. He has served several years as chair of the archdiocesan Ecumenical Commission, and since August has served as vicar-general in the Archdiocese of Regina.

From January to May of this year Bolen also held the Nash Chair in Religion at Campion College. He is an Associate Priest of the Madonna House Apostolate, and an Oblate of St. Peter’s Benedictine Abbey in Muenster, Saskatchewan.