

To: CNY Media
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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Media Advisory: A press conference with Bishop--designate Cunningham has been scheduled at 10am today at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Downtown Syracuse.

Pope Benedict XVI Appoints New Bishop for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Syracuse

Syracuse, NY – Pope Benedict XVI has appointed a new bishop for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Syracuse. Most Rev. Robert J. Cunningham, 65, of the Diocese of Ogdensburg will become the 10th bishop of Syracuse succeeding Bishop James M. Moynihan who has served the diocese since May 29, 1995. Bishop Cunningham will be installed on May 26, 2009 at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception located in Downtown Syracuse.

Bishop Moynihan submitted his resignation to the Holy Father upon his 75th birthday on July 6, 2007, as is required by Canon law. He will continue to serve as the Bishop of Syracuse until Bishop Cunningham's installation.

Bishop Robert J. Cunningham, son the late Cecil and Grace Cunningham, was born and raised in Buffalo, New York. He received his early education at St. John the Baptist Parish Elementary School and the Diocesan Preparatory Seminary, Buffalo. His college and seminary education continued at St. John Vianney Seminary, East Aurora, where he earned both Bachelor of Arts and Master of Divinity degrees. In 1978 he received a Licentiate Degree in Canon Law from the Catholic University of America.

Bishop Cunningham was ordained to the priesthood by Auxiliary Bishop Bernard J. McLaughlin on May 24, 1969 at St. Joseph New Cathedral in Buffalo. His first assignment was associate pastor at Blessed Sacrament Parish, Kenmore. In 1972 he became the assistant pastor at his home parish of St. John the Baptist, Kenmore.

He was named secretary to Bishop Edward D. Head and assistant chancellor of the Diocese of Buffalo in 1974. Upon the completion of his Licentiate Degree in Canon Law, Bishop Cunningham was named a judge in the marriage tribunal and vice-chancellor of the diocese. He was named a Monsignor by John Paul II in 1984. In 1985 he was appointed chancellor for the diocese and the following year, vicar general. In January 2002, Bishop Henry J. Mansell named Bishop Cunningham pastor of St. Louis Church in downtown Buffalo. In December of 2003, the diocesan College of Consultors in Buffalo elected him diocesan administrator, a position he held until his installation as the Bishop of Ogdensburg.

On March 9, 2004 His Holiness Pope John Paul II appointed Msgr. Robert J. Cunningham as the 13th Bishop of Ogdensburg. Bishop Cunningham was ordained and installed as the Bishop of Ogdensburg on May 18, 2004 at St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg. The Diocese has over 128,000 Catholics in the eight northernmost counties of New York State covering an area of 12,036 square miles.

In the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Bishop Cunningham has served as Chairman of Region II (Province of New York). He currently serves as a representative from Region II to the Administrative Committee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. He also serves on the Committee for Priorities and Plans, as well as on the Committee for the Protection of Children and Young People and the Sub-committee on Native American Catholics.

“Sent by Pope Benedict XVI, I come to teach and preach the Word of God; to love you with wholehearted affection and to serve your needs especially as a minister of the Eucharist and reconciliation. I hope to be a source of unity for the diocese”, said Bishop-designate Cunningham.

As Bishop of Syracuse, Bishop-designate Cunningham will be the shepherd of over 250,000 Catholics who reside in seven counties the diocese covering 5,479 square miles.

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The Roman Catholic Diocese of Syracuse was established on November 26, 1886 and comprises the counties of Broome, Chenango, Cortland, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga and Oswego. It has 142 parishes, 11 devotional missions, 3 devotional chapels, 29 Catholic schools, 3 Catholic hospitals; 8 Special Centers for Social Services. The diocese oversees 16 residential facilities that care for the disabled. The diocese has 264 offices including schools and employs nearly 3,000 people.

For more information, contact Danielle E. Cummings, Assistant Chancellor/Director of Communications at 315.470.1476 or daniellecummings@att.net.