

THE DIOCESE OF LA CROSSE SESQUICENTENNIAL

1868-2018
150 years
www.dioc.org/150



Bishop Frederick W. Freking
1965-1983

Sixth BISHOP OF LA CROSSE

Frederick W. Freking was born August 11, 1913 in Heron Lake, MN to August and Rose Freking. His early education was in local parochial and public schools. After completing his undergraduate degree at St. Mary's in Winona, he studied theology at the North American College in Rome where he was ordained July 31, 1938, at St. Ignatius Church by Archbishop Like Pasetto, OFM Cap. Returning to the Winona Diocese he served in parish work, secondary Catholic education and re-established the diocesan newspaper. Upon receiving his doctorate in Sacred Theology and Canon Law from the Catholic University in 1948 he returned to the diocese and served in the Chancery Office and was appointed Chancellor in 1952. A year later he was appointed Spiritual Director of the North American College in Rome, a position he held until appointed bishop of Salina, KS by Pius XII on October 10, 1957. He was consecrated in Rome on November 30, 1957 by Giuseppe Cardinal Pizzardo and assumed his responsibilities in Salina on January 7, 1958. On December 30, 1964 he was appointed Bishop of La Crosse by Pope Paul VI and installed February 24, 1965. Bishop Freking attended all four sessions of Vatican II. Returning from the last session he established diocesan commissions to implement the pertinent Vatican II documents in the areas of liturgy, priestly and religious life, education, communications, missions, ecumenism, and the laity. He established the first laity training program in the US in 1975. He was quoted "... the whole mission of the Church is a shared responsibility...We all share in that responsibility through our vocation in Baptism as Christians." Bishop Freking was particularly supportive of those who served the missions and religious women in the diocese. With enrollment declining, the struggling college and seminary that had been Bishop Treacy's dream could no longer be supported by the diocese. The college was closed in 1969 and the seminary in

1971. For three years the building was unoccupied until it re-opened on July 31, 1974 as the Diocesan Center. It has served many tenants and still continues to be home for many retired priests. In 1977, Monsignor John J. Paul was named auxiliary bishop of the La Crosse Diocese. Bishop Freking retired from active ministry on May 10, 1983. He died November 28, 1998.

For the first time in the history of the diocese, the diocesan coat of arms was displayed on the dextra side of his coat-of-arms. Designed by Sister M. Alice Rita, who taught at Regis High School, was adopted in 1953. The diocesan coat of arms is on a silver field. The three blue wavy lines represent the rivers that bound the diocese, Chippewa, Wisconsin, and Mississippi. The gold cross in the canoe symbolizes the evangelization of the early missionaries. The sheaf of wheat is symbolic of the Eucharist and the rural economy of the diocese. Under the left arm of the cross is a lacrosse racket from the game played by the native Americans in this area. The shape is also symbolic of the bishop's crozier. The green mounds in the background remind one of the natural beauty of the diocese. On the sinister side of the shield the background is gold. The surname Freking is a north German spelling of Van der Vrecken. In that family coat of arms are three cremailles which are adjustable cooking

instruments used in early open fireplaces. The black cross in the middle symbolizes his priesthood and the time spent as spiritual director of the North American College in Rome. The Orsini rose is symbolic of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the baptismal name of his mother, the Winona diocese where he was ordained and the North American College in Rome which originally belonged to the Orsini family. His motto is taken from Psalm 24, In Te Confido In Thee I Trust.

