

THE DIOCESE OF LA CROSSE SESQUICENTENNIAL

1868-2018
150 years
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Bishop James Schwebach
1891-1921

Third BISHOP OF LA CROSSE

James Schwebach was born on August 15, 1847 in Platen, Grand Duchy, Luxembourg to Nicholas Schwebach and Margaret Busch Schwebach. He came to the United States when just 17 in years of age in 1864 and entered the St. Francis Seminary studying under both Bishops Heiss and Flasch. James finished his studies at age 22, not yet of canonical age for ordination. Consequently he served as deacon at St. Mary's in La Crosse. Fluent in German, English, and French he was well accepted by people of those nationalities. He was ordained on the feast of Corpus Christi June 16, 1870 by Bishop Thomas Grace from St. Paul as Bishop Heiss was attending Vatican Council I in Rome. Bishop Heiss appointed him pastor of St. Mary's where he remained for nearly twenty-two years. When Bishop Flasch died in 1891, Archbishop Heiss named him diocesan administrator. He was appointed the third bishop of the Diocese of La Crosse by Pope Leo XIII on

November 30, 1891, received the official papers on December 14, 1891 and was installed on February 25, 1892 by Archbishop Fredrick Katzer, third Archbishop of Milwaukee. Like his predecessors he was a staunch proponent of Catholic School education. He built a large facility for orphans on a 180 farm south of La Crosse and dedicated it on October 12, 1911. He also cared for the transients who came to the area. One of his greatest concerns was the care for Native Americans. This concern, in part, was alleviated when the Diocese of Superior was established in 1905 and the La Crosse Diocese was reduced about to 17,299 square miles. The population of the diocese increased as did the number of parishes and schools. He died in office in June 6, 1921.

Little is known of Bishop Schwebach's Coat-of-Arms except that it bears the symbols of Faith, Hope, and Charity.

