



DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS
Office of Communications

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Mary Haarman
1-616-475-1240
1-616-443-3860

Diocese Announces New Parish

First new territorial parish in almost 30 years

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich – April 11, 2007 – Bishop Walter A. Hurley announced today that the Catholic Diocese of Grand Rapids has established its first new territorial parish in almost three decades. The new parish will be served by the Paulist Fathers who also staff the Catholic Information Center located in downtown Grand Rapids. The new parish will be named St. Luke University Parish and will serve the growing Ottawa County community as well as the more than 8,000 Grand Valley State University Catholic students, faculty and staff. The new parish will eventually be located in Allendale on the corner of Lake Michigan Drive (M-45) and 60th Avenue.

The Paulist Fathers, based in New York, will assign two additional priests to this diocese bringing the total of six to the Grand Rapids area. In keeping with their tradition and practice of living in community, Bishop Hurley has offered the Cathedral residence as their new home, allowing all six Paulist priests to occupy one location for their future. The Bishop will move, remaining in the city of Grand Rapids. The Bishop will continue to host various diocesan events at the Cathedral residence.

“The establishment of St. Luke University Parish reflects the vibrancy of the diocese and its more than 175,000 Catholics. It is an exciting time for the significant growth of the Church in Ottawa County including the active Grand Valley State University campus community,” said Bishop Hurley. Upon the arrival of the assigned pastor concrete plans will be formulated regarding services, programs, and facilities. A territorial parish has specific geographical boundaries. St. Luke University Parish will cover approximately 75 square miles.

“St. Luke, who was one of the four evangelists as well as a physician, personifies the Church’s commitment to evangelization as well as West Michigan’s dedication to healing and medicine,” said Bishop Hurley.

Many Michigan university communities are served by Catholic parishes including:

- St. Paul Campus Parish, Ferris State University
- St. John Fisher University Parish, Oakland University
- St. Mary Student Parish, University of Michigan
- St. John Student Parish, Michigan State University
- St. Mary University Parish, Central Michigan University
- St. Thomas More Parish, Western Michigan University
- Holy Trinity Student Parish, Eastern Michigan University
- Catholic Newman Center, Lake Superior State University
- St. Albert the Great, Michigan Technological University

“The Paulists have been a part of the Grand Rapids community for almost 60 years,” said Bishop Hurley. In 1947, Bishop Francis J. Haas invited the Paulist Fathers to begin a ministry in downtown Grand Rapids. The ministry allowed people inquiring about the Catholic faith to simply walk into a building where classes and literature would be available. Today, the Catholic Information Center serves thousands from downtown workers, to visitors and parishioners of the Center.

“The Very Rev. John F. Duffy, President of the Paulist Fathers, and the Paulist Fathers General Council are pleased to accept the generous invitation of Bishop Hurley to establish St. Luke University Parish,” said Father Mark-David Janus, CSP, director of the Catholic Information Center, Chapel of St. Paul. “The Paulist Fathers, involved in evangelization in Western Michigan since 1947, have an extensive history of campus ministry at public campuses throughout the country and welcome this opportunity to expand their regional ministry to one of the leading educational institutions in this area. St. Luke, a companion of St. Paul, made his story known in the Acts of the Apostles and the Paulists look forward to continuing the mission of their patron,” Father Janus added.

In 1979, the diocese established the territorial parish of Our Lady of the Lake Parish in Holland. Today, that parish has almost 1,200 households. Our Lady of La Vang Parish, founded to serve the specific needs of the Vietnamese community (rather than a geographic area), was opened in 1999.

The Diocese of Grand Rapids has 102 parishes and missions in an 11-county area serving 175,000 Catholics.

###