



# DIOCESE OF GREAT FALLS-BILLINGS

## OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

P.O. Box 1399 \* Great Falls, Montana 59403 \* (406) 727-6683

[www.diocesegfb.org](http://www.diocesegfb.org)

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### **PRESS RELEASE:**

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### **Fr Jeffrey Michael Fleming named Coadjutor Bishop of Great Falls-Billings**

Pope Francis announced early today that he has named Reverend Jeffrey Michael Fleming, a priest of the Diocese of Helena, Montana, as the Coadjutor Bishop of Great Falls-Billings, Montana.

A coadjutor is an assistant bishop with the right of succession. Bishop Michael W. Warfel, who has shepherded the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings since 2008, will continue as diocesan bishop. When he retires, Coadjutor Bishop-elect Fleming will automatically succeed him. Bishop Warfel turns 75, the age when bishops are required to turn in their resignation to the Pope, on September 16, 2023.

“I am humbled and honored by this appointment,” said Bishop-elect Fleming “I am grateful to the Holy Father and encouraged by his confidence in me. I am looking forward to serving alongside Bishop Warfel and learning from the priests, leaders and faithful in the Church of Central and Eastern Montana.”

A native son of Montana, Fr. Fleming was born to Mike and Glenda Fleming in Billings and raised in Belt. He graduated from Carroll College in Helena, MT., with degrees in Theology and Religious Education. He attended Mt. Angel Seminary in St. Benedict, Ore. earning an MA in Theology, and was ordained to the priesthood on May 19, 1992 by Bishop Eldon Francis Curtiss. He earned a Licentiate in Canon Law (JCL) in 1998 from the Catholic University of America.

He was assigned (1992) as Associate Pastor for the Anaconda Catholic Community and then (1996) to the Cathedral of St. Helena before an appointment as Chaplain to Carroll College and Priest Director of Legendary Lodge in 1998. In 2003 he was made pastor of St. Rose of Lima Parish in Dillon before becoming the pastor (2006) at Christ the King Parish in Missoula. Pastoral responsibility (2013) for St. John the Baptist Parish in Frenchtown was added before he was assigned to Helena in 2019. While administrator for St. Thomas Parish in Helmsville, St. Jude Parish in Lincoln, and Flint Creek Catholic Community, he served the Diocese of Helena as Director of the Chancery, Vice Chancellor, and Adjutant Judicial Vicar. In 2020 he was appointed Moderator of the Curia and Chancellor and in 2022 became the pastor of St. Mary Parish in Helena.



*Bishop's Livestock Brand*



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Bishop-elect Fleming is expected to begin his ministry as Coadjutor Bishop and relocate to the Diocese in June of 2022. A Mass of ordination and welcome at 2:00 PM is planned for June 22, 2022 the Feast of St. Thomas Moore at Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Great Falls.

“I know that I speak for all the priests, deacons, consecrated religious, and faithful of the Catholic Diocese of Great Falls-Billings who join with me in giving heartfelt thanks to Almighty God and to our Holy Father Pope Francis for sending us the Rev. Jeff Fleming as Coadjutor Bishop-Elect. He knows Eastern Montana well and has the combined experience of ministry in parishes and diocesan administration, to serve us well in the future. I have assured Bishop Fleming that he can expect an enthusiastic welcome in our local Church, and that we look forward to his pastoral ministry and leadership. Upon my retirement, I will be happy to know that he will become the Bishop of Great Falls-Billings.

Bishop Warfel said, “About six months ago, through the Papal Nuncio, I petitioned our Holy Father Pope Francis to appoint a Coadjutor Bishop to help me in the administration of our Diocese and to begin a transition for the eventual new Ordinary. I am extremely grateful to the Pope for granting my request and sending us this good shepherd.”

The Diocese of Great-Falls Billings is comprised of 95,158 square miles with a total population of 420,401. The 50 parishes and 50 missions in the diocese serve a Catholic population of 38,654.



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