

# Pope Francis appoints administrator of Greensburg, Pa., to head the diocese

WASHINGTON (CNS) – Pope Francis has appointed Msgr. Larry J. Kulick, diocesan administrator of the Diocese of Greensburg, Pennsylvania, to head the diocese.

Bishop-designate Kulick, 54, was elected administrator in September to oversee governance of the diocese after Bishop Edward C. Malesic was installed Sept. 14 to head the Diocese of Cleveland.

Since 2012, the bishop-designate, 54, has been vicar general, moderator of the curia, acting chancellor and pastor of St. James Parish in New Alexandria, Pennsylvania.

The appointment was announced in Washington Dec. 18 by Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio.

“I would like to express my gratitude to the Holy Father for his confidence and trust in appointing me as bishop of the Diocese of Greensburg,” Bishop-designate Kulick said in a statement.

Western Pennsylvania “has always been my home,” he said. “I feel honored to be able to serve as bishop in the diocese where I was born, raised, educated, ordained and have served my entire life.”

He noted two things he said define the people of western Pennsylvania: “a strong faith and a strong work ethic.” These also were “crucial in my upbringing and formation,” he added. “As I begin my episcopal ministry, I know we have a great deal of work to do in caring for our community of faith in a post-pandemic world.

“Working with each other, I believe the church and its people can continue to be of great assistance to those who are in spiritual and physical need,” he remarked.

Bishop Malesic said Pope Francis “has chosen well” in appointing Greensburg’s diocesan administrator as its next leader and he will be “an excellent shepherd” who will be “a strong pastoral leader” for a diocese of “people of strong faith.”

Bishop-designate Kulick “is a compassionate pastor, devoted priest and very capable teacher of the faith,” the Cleveland bishop said in a statement Dec. 18. “I personally witnessed his love for the church in western Pennsylvania and his dedication to giving witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in all circumstances.”

“(He) was at my side during my five years of ministry in the Diocese of Greensburg,” Bishop Malesic said. “I could always count on his wisdom and ability to work tirelessly to advance the mission of the church for the good of God’s people.”

In the neighboring Pittsburgh Diocese, Bishop David A. Zubik said he was “thrilled for the faithful for the Diocese of Greensburg that Pope Francis has appointed one of their own clergy” to be their sixth bishop.

He called Bishop-designate Kulick “an amazing pastor and an outstanding administrator,” who he has known since he was a seminary student. “He was impressive then and even more so now,” Bishop Zubik said.

The Greensburg Diocese, in a news release, called the newly named bishop “a devoted servant to the Lord, best characterized as a ‘roll up his sleeves and get to work’ kind of leader.”

Bishop-designate Kulick is a canon lawyer “and recognized by many to be a strategic and energetic administrator, even in

the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic," it said.

With Mass attendance at 30% to 40% of pre-pandemic levels, he acknowledged the severe impact the pandemic has had on "every form of stewardship," so he directed each parish in the Greensburg Diocese to publish an annual fiscal report simultaneously, for the first time in diocesan history.

The reports, issued in November, detailed the impact of COVID-19 on each parish, "but also illustrated the outreach efforts made by those same parishes to those in need during the pandemic," according to the news release.

Some of these efforts include:

- The launch of 110 new ministries to address needs during the pandemic, including homebound phone and mail outreach, volunteer cooks who packed and served free takeout meals, and the provision of clothing, coats and canned goods.
- Many parishes boosted or developed new video ministries, using parish volunteers' expertise to stream Mass on YouTube and social media.
- 2,000 Catholics dedicated "their time and talent" to carry out these new ministries.
- All 78 parishes of the four-county diocese have donated items or facilitated financial assistance for those in need during the pandemic; parishes distributed \$250,000 in assistance, and an additional \$200,000 in COVID-19 relief dollars was given out via Catholic Charities.

Currently, 44 diocesan parishes are now livestreaming Mass. In November, then-Msgr. Kulick announced in addition to in-person Christmas Masses throughout the Diocese of Greensburg, there also will be streaming and televised Christmas Masses for those who cannot gather.

He also helped establish a committee to reopen in-person

worship, developing safety protocols for parishes and schools. New evangelization tools for parishes include an e-mail and text message alert system, online and printed resources for worshipping at home and social media events.

Larry James Kulick was born Feb. 24, 1966, to Larry J. Sr. and Myrna Dolores Coleman Kulick. He is a native of Leechburg, Pennsylvania, where he was a parishioner of the former St. Martha Parish.

A 1984 graduate of St. Joseph High School in Natrona Heights, Pennsylvania Bishop-designate Kulick earned a bachelor's degree in philosophy from St. Vincent College in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, in 1988. He attended St. Vincent Seminary in Latrobe, where he received a master's degree in systematic theology in 1991 and a master of divinity degree in 1992.

He was ordained to the priesthood on May 16, 1992, by Bishop Anthony G. Bosco at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral in Greensburg. He earned a licentiate in canon law from The Catholic University of America in Washington in 2012.

Due to his heritage, Bishop-elect Kulick is active in many Slovak cultural and fraternal organizations locally and nationally. He has been a life member of the First Catholic Slovak Union and has served as chaplain for the George Onda District for more than 25 years.

He also is a classic car enthusiast. Parishioners with similar interests have assisted him for many years in bringing hundreds of people to car cruises in his parish, St. James in New Alexandria, for a day of summer fun and fundraising.

He's had a lifelong love of General Motors' Pontiac brand. He has displayed 1966 Pontiac LeMans at parish car shows. He was brought home from the hospital as a newborn in that car. When he turned 18, his grandmother gave him the car as a birthday present.