

THE DIOCESE OF BELLEVILLE

July 16, 2020
Our Lady of Mount Carmel

Dear Father Deeke,

May the Peace of Christ be with you!

As you know, the Diocese is mourning the untimely death of the Reverend Monsignor Kenneth J. Schaefer. This sad event requires me to make pastoral provisions for Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in Herrin and Holy Spirit Parish in Carterville. After consultation and prayer, I have decided to appoint The Reverend Mark D. Reyling as Administrator of these two parishes. In a similar manner, after prayer and consultation, I have decided to appoint you to succeed Father Reyling as Administrator of St. Joseph Parish in Freeburg and St. Agatha Parish in New Athens. **The effective date of this appointment will be Wednesday, August 19, 2020.** (Please review canons 515-544 of The Code of Canon Law). With this letter, I authorize you to act in the name of both parishes in all matters according to Canon 532.

Since you are appointed as Administrator, neither a formal Installation nor the Profession of Faith and Oath of Fidelity are required. However, when you are appointed Pastor, these will be required and the signed documents should be returned to the Bishop's office.

I am deeply grateful to you for your many years of dedicated service at St. Augustine of Canterbury Parish in Hecker, for your unselfish assistance to me at the Bishop's Residence, and for your willingness to take up greater pastoral responsibility with two parishes and a school. I know that the Christian Faithful at St. Joseph and St. Agatha Parishes, knowing the critical situation in the Diocese and realizing it was possible that the Diocese would not have a priest available to serve them if we transferred Father Reyling, will eagerly welcome you and help you to get acquainted with the life of each parish and the local communities. Father Reyling has been a generous and dedicated Pastor, who will be missed by the parishioners. At the same time, I am sure they will want you to serve them in your own way, making good use of your personal talents and gifts. They understand well that no two priests are the same in every respect.

As you assume this new ministry, I urge you to give special attention to St. Joseph Parish School. Be mindful of the sensitive recent difficult decision to close St. Agatha School and that the process of merging that school community with St. Joseph School is underway. Visit the school often, make yourself available to answer the questions that the students and faculty will surely have about the Catholic faith. Be attentive to the Christian formation of young people and the nourishing of vocations to the Priesthood, the Diaconate, and the Religious Life. There is no more urgent need in our Diocese than future priests. Use every opportunity to work and pray for vocations to the Priesthood.

Office of the Bishop

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I know how much the people of God at St. Augustine of Canterbury Parish admire and appreciate you and how saddened they will be by the news of this appointment. At the same time, they will appreciate the fact that you are being given greater responsibilities in service to the Church.

Your parishioners have long known that the **PASTORAL PLAN FOR PARISH RENEWAL AND RESTRUCTURING** would have an impact on every parish in the Diocese. They are in a **PARISH PARTNERSHIP** with Saints Peter and Paul Parish with the understanding that, when the need arises, these two parishes would be served by one Pastor.

After you have been in your new assignment for about six months (February 2021), I encourage you to arrange a visit with the Bishop so that you may reflect together on your new pastoral experiences.

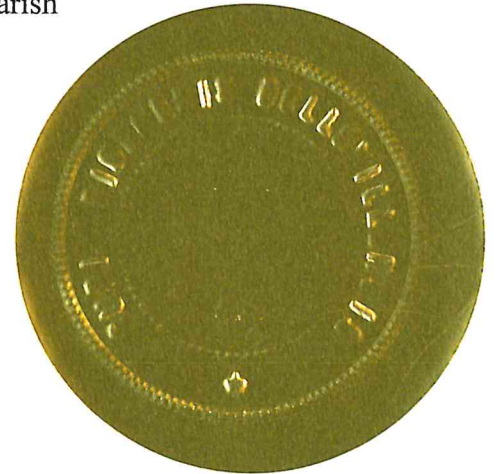
May the Lord who begins this good work in you, dear Father Deeke, bring it to fulfillment. *Oremus pro invicem.*

Fraternally and appreciatively yours in Christ,


The Most Reverend Edward K. Braxton, Ph. D, S.T.D.
Apostolic Administrator
Diocese of Belleville

Copies: The Reverend Monsignor John W. McEvilly, Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia
The Reverend Monsignor John T. Myler, Chair, Priests' Personnel Board
The Reverend Mark D. Reyling, Pastor, St. Joseph Parish and St. Agatha Parish
The Reverend Linus Umoren, C.M., Pastor, SS. Peter & Paul Parish
The Reverend Osang F. Idagbo, C.M.

The Reverend Von C. Deeke
Pastor
St. Augustine of Canterbury Parish
310 N. Main Street, P. O. Box 126
Hecker, Illinois 62248



P.S. This letter is to be read the weekend of July 18-19, 2020 at all the Masses at of St. Joseph Parish in Freeburg and St. Agatha Parish in New Athens, and St. Augustine Parish in Hecker. Please publish this letter on your parish websites, make copies of it to be inserted in your parish bulletins, and make its contents well known.