



PONTIFICAL NORTH AMERICAN COLLEGE 00120 VATICAN CITY STATE - EUROPE

Rector Named for the Pontifical North American College

ROME, November 23, 2015 – The Congregation for Clergy in Rome has appointed the **Reverend Peter C. Harman**, a priest of the diocese of Springfield in Illinois, and currently the Director of Pastoral Formation at the College as its 23rd Rector effective February 1, 2016. The appointment of Fr. Harman comes upon the completion of the ten-year service of Msgr. James Checchio.

Fr. Harman is a native of Quincy Illinois, attended Quincy Notre Dame High School and St. Meinrad College Seminary before beginning study at the North American College in 1995. Ordained a priest on July 17, 1999, Fr. Harman returned to Rome to complete the License in Sacred Theology. He began his pastoral service in 2000 in Springfield at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, where he would later serve as pastor for five years including during its 2008-2009 restoration. He had also taught at Ursuline Academy and spent two years at St. Agnes Parish. Fr. Harman earned the Doctorate in Sacred Theology at the Catholic University of America, and later returned to Rome to serve in his current role on the North American College formation faculty, as well as serving as its director of Media Relations and as an adjunct instructor in theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University.

Archbishop John Myers, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the College and Archbishop of Newark noted, “I am very happy in the choice of Fr. Harman, whom I know from his fine service in his diocese and to the College, and I am grateful to the Congregation for Clergy for their consideration of our recommendation for his appointment. I look forward to working with him in the years to come.”

Springfield Bishop Thomas John Paprocki commented: “It is a great honor for Father Peter Harman and for our diocese that he has been named the new Rector of the Pontifical North American College in Rome. Father Harman is a faithful priest with many talents, as he exhibited in his various assignments here in the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois, particularly in overseeing the renovation of our Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception when he was Pastor of our Cathedral Parish in Springfield. We wish Father Harman well and pray for God’s blessings as he assumes these new responsibilities in forming and educating future priests for the United States.”

The current Rector, Msgr. James Checchio expressed his gratitude for the appointment as well. “To have a priest of Father Harman’s caliber with his pastoral and educational background will be a blessing for the seminarians and priests entrusted to his care. We’re grateful to him and Bishop Paprocki for making this possible.”

When asked about the appointment, Fr. Harman stated, “I view the time I spent as a seminarian, here at the College, as such an important gift to me. While very much surprised and humbled by this appointment, I am eager to do anything I can to further the good work that takes place here. I am daily reminded of and inspired by the joyful and generous lives of the seminarians, student priests and faculty.” Noting that he is aware of the significant responsibility of this assignment, “We are surrounded here by so many good and gracious things that our alumni, friends and benefactors make possible, I approach this work with a renewed gratitude for the good work of the College today and God’s never failing providence for us into tomorrow.”

The Pontifical North American College serves as the American seminary for diocesan clergy in Rome. Founded in 1859 by Blessed Pius IX, the college has formed over 5,000 priests near the heart of the Church for service in dioceses around the United States. The College strengthens the bonds between Rome and local Churches worldwide, and it allows its students to study the Church’s rich religious and cultural heritage at close range. It currently forms nearly 250 men for the priesthood and houses an additional 70 priests pursuing graduate studies in Rome.

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