

With no bishop, Seton Vicariate work continues with collaboration

By Maria Wiering

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When Bishop Mitchell T. Rozanski left the Archdiocese of Baltimore in August to lead the Diocese of Springfield, Mass., he also vacated his role as vicar of the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Vicariate, a geographical and canonical jurisdiction that spans the archdiocese's southern and western counties.

Monsignor James W. Hannon, who has pastored several parishes in the vicariate, is filling the void as interim director of the Office of the Seton Vicariate. He expects to continue Bishop Rozanski's work, he said, including parish planning and regular visits with parish leaders.

"Bishop Mitch served the Seton Vicariate well - and he will be missed for some time," Monsignor Hannon told the Catholic Review by e-mail. "Now the challenge is to move on, to grow and see what needs are before us in the present."



Monsignor Hannon expects Archbishop William E. Lori and Auxiliary Bishop Denis J. Madden, who heads the St. John Neumann Vicariate, to "be generous in their availability to the parishes of the Seton Vicariate as they have always been."

"Given that," he said, "I don't really think that the parishes of the Seton Vicariate will really feel the absence of a bishop in any significant way."

Stretching from the mountains to the shore, the Seton Vicariate includes Allegany, Anne Arundel, Carroll, Frederick, Garrett, Howard and Washington counties, encompassing 55 parishes and three mission churches.

The Neumann Vicariate includes Baltimore City, Baltimore County and Harford County.

Among a bishops' most visible responsibilities is conferring the sacrament of confirmation, which in this diocese is usually celebrated in parishes. In the absence of a Seton-assigned bishop, Archbishop Lori and Bishop Madden are working with bishops outside the archdiocese who have offered to help celebrate confirmations in the vicariate, Monsignor Hannon said.

Monsignor Hannon will continue to serve as the director of the Office of Clergy Personnel, where he has overseen priest and deacon assignments since 2011. He has also served as a temporary administrator at Our Lady of the Fields in Millersville and as a pastor in Mountain Maryland. He was instrumental in merging five

Cumberland parishes into Our Lady of the Mountains in 2011.

Monsignor Hannon will serve as the vicariate director “until such time as an auxiliary bishop is appointed,” Archbishop Lori said in an Aug. 18 letter to ministerial leaders.

Monsignor Hannon expects the Holy See to appoint another auxiliary bishop to the archdiocese, but doesn’t know when.

“Archbishop Lori has expressed his desire that this be so,” he said, “and he will be working with the proper authorities to make known the needs of the Archdiocese of Baltimore regarding our need for another auxiliary bishop. We know from past experience that it does take some time for this process to occur, so I think its best that we set about our work and trust that God will provide all that we need to continue.”

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