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1889-2014



Celebrating 125 Years

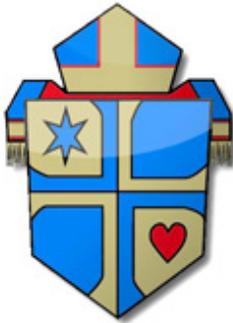
Meet Our Founding Member Dioceses

This year, as we mark our 125th anniversary, Catholic Mutual celebrates the six founding member dioceses who came together to form our organization. Our prior newsletters have featured the Archdiocese of Omaha, the Archdiocese of Kansas City, the Diocese of Sioux Falls, and the Diocese of Wichita.

In December, we are proud to spotlight the Diocese of Salina and we will finish off our anniversary year in February with the Diocese of Lincoln. Just as in 1889, the year we were founded, it is our members who help us stay true to our mission of service to the Church.

We invite you to share this newsletter with any staff, clergy or other members of your diocese whom you think would enjoy it.

Diocese of Salina



The coat of Arms of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Salina (left), the Coat of Arms of the Most Reverend Edward J. Weisenburger, Diocese of Salina (right)



Most Reverend Edward J. Weisenburger, Diocese of Salina

“Whenever I call Catholic Mutual to ask if something’s okay, I get an immediate response and the answer is almost always a yes,” says Jennifer Hood, assistant finance officer of the Diocese of Salina. “It’s a really unique partnership that we have: really more like a friendship. We appreciate them and we feel appreciated by them.”

And it’s not just Hood who feels the love. Because the diocese stretches out across 31 counties in North Central and Northwest Kansas, many of which are extremely rural, it can be difficult for the staff

at the diocesan office to get to each of the locations as often as they’d like. Thankfully, they have a member of the Catholic Mutual Risk Management team inspect their facilities once a year.

“With Catholic Mutual out there, visiting our parishes, the pastors and business managers feel more comfortable about calling them directly when they need something or have a question, rather than going through me,” says Hood, who wears many hats at the diocesan office. “They can get an immediate response and I know that the situation will be handled.”



The Basilica of St. Fidelis in Victoria, which was designated a minor basilica in February 2014

There’s another reason why these visits are essential. As a mission diocese, about half of the parishes don’t have a resident pastor so the inspections often head trouble off before it begins.

“The smaller parishes, where there’s no one there full-time, really appreciate this,” says Doug Weller, editor of *The Register*, the newspaper of the Diocese of Salina. “The diocese makes every effort to keep parishes open as long as it’s feasible to support them but when no one is there to keep an eye on things, there’s a potential for disaster. It can be a real challenge for them.”

Another challenge is the high risk of storms on the plains. Weller recalls a 2008 tornado that ripped through the town of Chapman, leveling a little stone church that was home to the very first parish in the diocese.



Sacred Heart Cathedral

Catholic Mutual was able to help in the restoration of the adjacent cemetery, but sadly, the original church could not be saved. Today, a memorial with stones from the building sits on the site.

It serves as a poetic reminder of the way the Diocese of Salina honors its legacy while moving toward the future. When they were created in 1887 (just two years before helping to form Catholic Mutual), they were served by circuit priests who made their rounds on horseback,



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...serving the Catholics in each town once every three months or so. Later, came the Irish missionary priests who served through the 1960s.

Today, according to Weller, about one-fourth of all the active priests in the diocese are international, mostly from India. "People are embracing them with a passion," he says.

As we have learned over the years, those who are embraced by the Diocese of Salina have a friend forever.