



# The Diocese of Knoxville

Living our Roman Catholic faith in East Tennessee

PRESS RELEASE AND MEDIA ADVISORY  
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## Superintendent named for Catholic schools

**KNOXVILLE**—Bishop Richard F. Stika announced on May 16 that he has hired Sister Mary Marta Abbott, RSM, as superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Knoxville, effective July 1.

The diocese's Catholic School system includes eight primary schools and two high schools throughout East Tennessee.

Sister Mary Marta earned a master's degree in education with a concentration in principalship and an education specialist degree with a concentration in central office/superintendence at Saginaw Valley State University in University Center, Mich. She earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education and a minor in theology at the University of Portland, Ore.

Her professional background includes serving as a third-grade teacher at St. John the Baptist Catholic School in Milwaukie, Ore.—where she challenged her students to become saints—and as associate director at Catholic Youth Camp in McGregor, Minn. She has also had many years of management experience and has worked in evangelization.

She is a member of the Religious Sisters of Mercy of Alma, Mich., which established a convent in Knoxville in 2009.

"Sister Mary Marta will work to further promote Catholic identity in our schools," the bishop wrote in his May 16 memo.

"Catholic schools afford the fullest and best opportunity to realize the fourfold purpose of Christian education: to provide an atmosphere in which the Gospel message is proclaimed, community in Christ is experienced, service to our sisters and brothers is the norm, and thanksgiving for and worship of our God are cultivated," he wrote.

"I am delighted that Sister Mary Marta is coming to work with us," the bishop said. "She is filled with great energy and an eagerness to ensure that the environment of our Catholic schools is one of strong moral values and deep faith."

Sister Mary Marta is a native of Texas and a convert to the Roman Catholic faith. She said she loves people and enjoys outdoor activities—and that she looks forward to living in East Tennessee, where she can explore its lakes and mountains.

She replaces Dr. Sherry Morgan, who has served as superintendent of Catholic Schools since July 2003. Dr. Morgan will retire at the end of June.