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Bishop Cistone Announces Religious Sister of Mercy of Alma as Catholic Family Service Executive Director

SAGINAW — The Most Rev. Joseph Cistone, Bishop of Saginaw, today announced that Sister Mary Rebecca Koterba, R.S.M., MD, has been named Catholic Family Service Executive Director. Sister Mary Rebecca is a member of the Religious Sisters of Mercy of Alma. She is a board certified physician and surgeon with more than three decades of medical experience.

Sister Mary Rebecca Koterba, R.S.M., MD, will immediately assume the position held by Thomas Conklin for nearly 30 years. Conklin, who died unexpectedly in September, was loved and respected within the diocese and greater community.

“We were stunned and saddened by Tom’s death,” Bishop Cistone said. “His many years of service to the Diocese and to Catholic Family Service in particular were a great blessing for which we are deeply grateful. In view of his passing, I reached out to the Religious Sisters of Mercy of Alma to ask if there was a sister willing to take on the executive director position. I am delighted that Sister Mary Rebecca agreed. The community will benefit greatly from her vast experience, expertise, compassion and desire to serve.”

Catholic Family Service is an affiliate of the Diocese of Saginaw, and has 31 employees serving in three offices located in Saginaw, Bay City and Mt. Pleasant. Catholic Family Service provides a wide variety of adoption, counseling and guardianship services to individuals, couples, and families in need across the diocese. Most insurance is accepted, while private pay, as well as a sliding fee scale, is available.

Catholic Family Service also holds the contract to act as guardian for Bay County Probate Court, and has done so since 1997. The work of Catholic Family Service is supported annually through the diocesan Catholic Services Appeal.

“The spiritual and corporal works of mercy are what guide my life,” said Sister Mary Rebecca Koterba, R.S.M., MD. “It is my great hope that my commitment to the works of mercy, along with my skills and experience in medicine, will enable me to see and meet the needs of families and individuals, and participate in making their lives better. It is a privilege to be working within the diocese, in an area which has so much need.”

Sister Mary Rebecca most recently worked in Tulsa, Oklahoma, at Saint Francis Health System, Trauma Institute as an Acute Care Surgeon, Wound Care Clinical Director and supervisor of staff and patient care. She also served as an adjunct clinical professor at Oklahoma State University. Previous experiences include: general surgeon at Sacred Heart Mercy Health Care in Alma; chief of surgery at Mid-Michigan Medical Center in Alma; founder, medical director and supervisor of staff and patient care at Wound Treatment Center in Alma; wound clinic physician at Covenant Healthcare in Saginaw; and adjunct

clinical professor at Michigan State University, where she received her Doctor of Medicine degree in 1983.

In 2011, Sister Mary Rebecca was presented with the Outstanding Volunteer Award by the Michigan State Medical Society after traveling on a medical relief mission to Haiti following the earthquake.

“Catholic Family Service provides very important support to our parishes and throughout the community,” Bishop Cistone said. “I am confident that with the leadership of Sister Mary Rebecca and the continued dedication of our highly trained staff, we will strengthen our commitment to serve those most in need, today and in the future.”

Catholic Family Service is a private not-for-profit agency that provides a full range of services to individuals, couples, and families in the eleven counties of the Catholic Diocese of Saginaw, regardless of age, ethnicity, physical handicap, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation.

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