

**INSTALLATION OF THE
MOST REVEREND MICHAEL W. FISHER
AS FIFTEENTH BISHOP OF BUFFALO
FRIDAY, JANUARY 15, 2021**

NB: *Archbishop Pierre was not able to be present at the installation due to Covid-19 travel restrictions!*

Your Eminence Cardinal Dolan, Metropolitan Archbishop of New York, Bishop Scharfenberger, My Brother Archbishops and Bishops, Dear Priests, Deacons, Consecrated Religious, and Lay Faithful of the Diocese of Buffalo, Dear Friends:

I am truly pleased to be with you this afternoon as Bishop Michael Fisher is installed as the fifteenth Bishop of the Diocese of Buffalo.

Bishop Fisher, I know that you and your family have roots across Maryland and Washington, D.C., and that you love baseball. Here in Buffalo, you will learn to love the Buffalo Bisons, but you will also grow in your love for football, with the Bills, and ice hockey, with the Sabers, and, hopefully, you will learn to love the snow and the **four** seasons of Winter!!! Just kidding! Above all, you must grow in your love for the People of God here in Buffalo, who need a Shepherd who loves them and who reflects the compassionate and Merciful Heart of the Redeemer.

Here in this Cathedral of St. Joseph, the Venerable Father Nelson Baker was ordained a priest. His first assignment was to Limestone Hill, assisting in the care of orphans. He faced many challenges: some were financial; others were moral. But, he never lost hope in Jesus Christ or in Our Lady of Victory. He erased the debts of the orphanages and showed initiative in engaging the laity in his work, including charitable lay women. He had great confidence that Our Lord and Our Lady would provide for his institutions, and they did. Even in his time, the throwaway culture existed, and unwanted children were thrown into the Erie Canal. He created an infant home where unwed mothers and their babies would be welcomed.

He conquered his many challenges with faith in Jesus Christ and true devotion to Our Lady of Victory. He overcame every obstacle by God's power at work within him, and so he built, not just a basilica, but a "City of Charity."

Your Excellency, everyone knows the daunting task that you face, but I place before the words spoken by the Holy Father at Epiphany, by which he encouraged us to "lift up our eyes to the Lord", by which he meant:

"In other words, not to let ourselves be imprisoned by those imaginary specters that stifle hope, not to make our problems and difficulties the center of our lives. This does not mean denying reality, or deluding ourselves into thinking that all is well. On the contrary, it is a matter of viewing problems and anxieties in a new way, knowing that the Lord is aware of our troubles, attentive to our prayers and not indifferent to the tears we shed. ... When we lift up our eyes to God, life's problems do not go away, no; instead we feel certain that the Lord grants us the strength to deal with them. ... The joy of Christ's disciples ... is based on the fidelity of God, whose promises never fail, whatever the crises we may face." (Pope Francis, Homily for the Epiphany, 6 January 2021)

I want to assure you of our confidence in you and of our prayers. Your personal care and concern for the priests of Washington as Vicar for Clergy during difficult times made a tremendous difference, and I am sure it will here in Buffalo too. You will help the People of God here in Buffalo to lift up their heads, their eyes, and their hearts to the Lord.

With your installation, a new era will begin in the Diocese of Buffalo. We entrust you to Our Lady of Victory and to St. Joseph, the Patron of the Universal Church, praying that they will encourage and sustain you in your episcopal ministry.

Finally, let me thank Bishop Edward Scharfenberger for his service as Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese for more than a year. Your Excellency, we express our sincere appreciation for your service.

And now, I will read the Apostolic Letter of Appointment.