

**EPISCOPAL ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION
OF THE MOST REVEREND STEPHEN D. PARKES
AS FIFTEENTH BISHOP OF SAVANNAH
CATHEDRAL BASILICA OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST,
SEPTEMBER 23, 2020**

Your Excellency Metropolitan Archbishop Hartmayer, Your Excellency Bishop Boland, Bishop Emeritus of Savannah, Bishop-Elect Stephen Parkes, My Brother Archbishops and Bishops, Dear Priests, Deacons, Consecrated Religious and Lay Faithful of the Church in Savannah, and all those joining through live-streaming, television and radio:

I am pleased to be here in this beautiful cathedral in honor of Saint John the Baptist, who pointed out Jesus as the Lamb of God. Archbishop Hartmayer shepherded this historic See before his elevation to Metropolitan Archbishop, and we are grateful for his service. But this Diocese, which has a rich history, dating back to the Franciscan missionaries, some of whom shed their blood, which subsequently nourished the faith in this territory, will now be handed over to you. Give it a shepherd's care.

Today is the feast day of Padre Pio, whose marvelous work at San Giovanni Rotondo brought about numerous conversions and healings. Padre Pio is reported to have said, **"Always live under the eyes of the Good Shepherd and you will always walk unharmed through evil pastures."**

Although I am confident that these pastures are not so evil, Padre Pio gives good advice to the new Shepherd that the Holy Father has appointed for the Diocese of Savannah: **Always live under the eyes of the Good Shepherd.**

Your Excellency, Bishop-Elect Parkes, I suppose you and your brother Bishop Gregory Parkes grew up, not only under the watchful eye of Christ, the Good Shepherd, but under the loving care of your parents. You have already lived your priesthood in a distinguished way in service to the Diocese of Orlando. You will be particularly missed not only by Bishop Noonan and your brother priests, but also by your flock at Annunciation in Longwood. You are now asked to watch over, guard, protect, and nourish this beloved family of faith in Savannah.

As the new Shepherd of this Flock, I place before you the words of the Holy Father:

"A shepherd after the heart of God has a heart sufficiently free to set aside his own concerns. He does not live by calculating his gains or how long he has worked: he is not an accountant of the Spirit, but a Good Samaritan who seeks out those in need. For the flock he is a shepherd, not an inspector, and he devotes himself to the mission not fifty or sixty percent, but with all he has. In seeking, he finds, and he finds because he takes risks. Unless a shepherd risks, he does not find. He does not stop when disappointed and he does not yield to weariness. Indeed, he is stubborn in doing good, anointed with

the divine obstinacy that loses sight of no one.” (Pope Francis, Jubilee for Priests, 3 June 2016)

My Brother, the Holy Father is asking you to be close to the people of Savannah by taking risks for them and by being stubborn in doing good.

May the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Pio of Pietrelcina, St. John the Baptist, and your own patron, St. Stephen, the Proto-martyr, intercede for you and strengthen you as you begin your episcopal ministry.

And now, with great joy, I will read for you the Apostolic Letter of Appointment.