

**INSTALLATION OF  
THE MOST REVEREND STEVEN J. RAICA  
AS THE FIFTH BISHOP OF BIRMINGHAM IN ALABAMA  
TUESDAY, JUNE 23, 2020 AT 1:30 P.M.  
CATHEDRAL OF SAINT PAUL**

Your Excellency Metropolitan Archbishop Rodi, Your Excellencies Bishop Baker and Bishop Raica, My Brother Archbishops and Bishops, Dear Priests, Deacons, Consecrated Religious, and Lay Faithful of the Church in Birmingham, Dear Friends:

Centuries ago, in his work The Imitation of Christ, the German cleric Thomas à Kempis wrote: ***“Homo proponit, sed Deus disponit...Man proposes, but God disposes.”*** How grateful to God we are, Bishop Raica, that you have been generously disposed to accept this appointment to the See of Birmingham in Alabama. Like a true missionary and apostle, you have obediently accepted a mission to preach the Gospel and to pour yourself out like a libation, like Saint Paul, for whom this cathedral is named. I realize that it is very far from your home-state of Michigan, from the Diocese of Lansing for which you were ordained, and for the Diocese of Gaylord, which you have served faithfully as Bishop and Guardian of the Flock. Undoubtedly, your flock there, as well as your beloved-mother and brother, who could not join us today, will miss you, but they will also support you with their prayers, as will the people of the Diocese of Birmingham.

On this wonderful occasion, it is good to recall the timeless words of the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council as they reflected upon the role of the Bishop: **“In exercising his office of father and pastor the bishop should be with his people as one who serves, as a good shepherd who knows his sheep and whose sheep know him, as a true father who excels in his love and solicitude for all, to whose divinely conferred authority all readily submit. He should so unite and mold his flock into one family that all, conscious of their duties, may live and act in the communion of charity.”** (Christus Dominus, no. 16)

Your Excellency, may you be for the clergy and people entrusted to your pastoral care and also for the community at large a father, a pastor, a good shepherd, a brother who, in his faithful episcopal ministry, will continue to build up this portion of the Lord’s Flock into a vibrant communion of charity, which brings the joy of the Gospel into the whole world!

It would be remiss on my part if I did not extend heartfelt gratitude to the fourth Bishop of Birmingham, His Excellency Robert Baker, for his years of dedicated leadership here. He guided this Diocese during its

Fiftieth Anniversary celebrations, which culminated in a great Eucharistic Congress. Your Excellency, know of the heartfelt gratitude of the People of God for your faithful service as its Shepherd.

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