



THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
BIRMINGHAM *in* **ALABAMA**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 24, 2020

Birmingham's fifth bishop installed *Bishop Steven J. Raica installed as Bishop of Birmingham, June 23*

Birmingham, AL - The Diocese of Birmingham's wait for a new shepherd came to an end Wednesday, June 23. The Mass of Installation for Bishop Steven J. Raica was celebrated at the Cathedral of St. Paul in downtown Birmingham. Solemn vespers was celebrated by Bishop Emeritus Robert J. Baker the previous evening, June 22.

With the custom hammer, hand-made by Cathedral employee Philipp Szabo, Bishop Raica knocked on the door three times, after which Archbishop Thomas Rodi, Metropolitan of the Mobile Province, opened the door and welcomed Bishop Raica. Following his entrance, the bishop-elect venerated the crucifix held by Father Bryan Jerabek, pastor and rector of the Cathedral of St. Paul, then blessed those in the narthex with holy water.

Archbishop Rodi greeted all those present and thanked Bishop Emeritus Baker for his service to the Church in Birmingham. He then asked Archbishop Christophe Pierre, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, to read the Apostolic Letter of Appointment. After the letter was read, it was handed to Bishop Raica who carried it throughout the cathedral for all those present to see. The last part of the Rite of Installation followed with the nuncio and the archbishop walking Birmingham's new bishop to his Cathedra, or bishop's chair. Archbishop Rodi then handed a smiling Bishop Raica the crosier of Bishop Joseph Vath, Birmingham's first bishop.

Concelebrating bishops included Bishop Earl Boyea of Lansing, Bishop Kurt Burnette of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic, Bishop Mark Spalding of Nashville, Bishop Richard Stika of Knoxville, Bishop David Talley of Memphis, Bishop Joseph Kopacz of Jackson, Bishop Louis Kihneman of Biloxi, Bishop William Wack of Pensacola-Tallahassee, and Bishop Emeritus Baker.

KEYS TO A CHRISTIAN LIFE

Birmingham's new bishop began his homily welcoming those present and acknowledging those unable to physically attend due to current pandemic restrictions. He also took the opportunity to thank Bishop Emeritus Baker for his "tenure of faithful episcopal ministry" in the Diocese of Birmingham. Of Bishop Baker, he said, "The priests, deacons, religious and faithful of Birmingham have been truly blessed by your dedication to ministry and your steadfast discipleship with Christ our Lord! I can already see that I have some big shoes to fill!"

He went on to assure the faithful that he is committed to being their shepherd "for better, for worse, in sickness and in health." As he continued, Bishop Raica highlighted three "keys" that he says will "open the door for a fruitful life as a Christian here in the Diocese of Birmingham." "To say 'yes' to God's invitation, to 'look' and see Christ around us ... and to 'go' out and embark on a mission of witnessing God's love by our lives ... May God provide us with the grace and strength to live for Him each and every day!"

Bishop Raica succeeds Bishop Emeritus Robert J. Baker, who served the Diocese of Birmingham since October of 2007.

Bishop Raica was born Nov. 8, 1952, ordained a priest Oct. 14, 1978, named as an Honorary Prelate of His Holiness in 1998, ordained and installed as Bishop of Gaylord, Michigan Aug. 28, 2014, and appointed Bishop of Birmingham March 25, 2020.

For more information, contact Father Douglas Vu at 205.838.8322 or fatherdougvu@gmail.com.

Roman Catholic Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama
2121 3rd Avenue, North, Birmingham, Alabama 35203
205.838.8322 | bhmdiocese.org