



## DIOCESE OF GAYLORD

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March 25, 2020  
Solemnity of the Annunciation

Dear Faithful of the Diocese of Gaylord:

Today, on the Solemnity of the Annunciation, we remember Mary's "*Fiat!*" or "Let it be done to me as you say!" to the announcement from the Archangel Gabriel to her that she would conceive and bear a son. With this in my heart, it is with both gratitude and anticipation that I share that earlier today our Holy Father announced my upcoming transfer to the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama. There I will be humbled to serve as the fifth Bishop of Birmingham. Like the witness of our Lady, and with devotion to her, I too say, "*Fiat!*" It is my "yes" to the Lord's call at this moment.

While this announcement comes in these unprecedented times, I know that God has a beautiful plan that continues to unfold for the Diocese of Gaylord. Be assured, even after my transfer, I will continue to share in your triumphs and challenges from afar, ardently praying for each of you in your journeys of faith.

I want you to know that I have treasured every moment of ministry with you. Each bishop who has served here in the Diocese of Gaylord has spoken about the vibrant people of the diocese with admiration and esteem — I too cherish each of you. The mosaic of your unique gifts and talents, outpouring of charity for one other, and above all, your love for the Lord has made a tremendous impact on me. I will sincerely miss you and always remember my service here with thanksgiving and gladness.

I would also be remiss if I did not say that it has been a joy to serve with my brother priests, sisters, and colleagues in ministry. Their collaboration and steadfast witness for the mission of Christ and His Church has been an extraordinary gift to me. Their dedication and zeal to the mission of Christ here in the diocese is unparalleled, and I will miss each of them.

I appreciate that this announcement of my transition may leave questions for you, such as: Who will lead our flock here? When will this transfer take place? To announce that I am being transferred right now might lead one to think there is an abandonment. While a Bishop normally transitions to a new diocese within two months, I have asked that I will remain here for an additional month. Therefore, the Mass of installation is currently scheduled in Birmingham at the Cathedral of St. Paul on Tuesday, June 23, 2020.

Let me close for today by saying that it is most important to seize this moment in prayer, asking that the Lord continue to guide and bless all those in the Diocese of Gaylord and in the Diocese of Birmingham. Today on this Solemnity of the Annunciation, Pope Francis invites each of us to accompany him and our brothers and sisters around the world in praying an Our Father. I cannot image a better way to begin this time of transition. As we entrust our hearts to the Lord together today, know that you are in my prayers.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Steven J Raica  
Bishop of Gaylord