



# OUR LADY OF SORROWS

CATHOLIC PARISH  
1730 Oxmoor Road  
Birmingham, Alabama 35209

November 26, 2025

My dear Our Lady of Sorrows Family,

With this letter, I am passing on to you a statement from Bishop Raica, which provides the conclusion of the matter presented against Father Bob Sullivan. Along with Father Manoj and our entire parish and school staff, who have admirably continued to do the Lord's work for each of you during this time, I would like to express our gratitude for your patience while we awaited the official resolution.

I have been edified by your prayerful response to a difficult moment in the life of our parish. You have remained steadfast and resilient in the face of a myriad of thoughts and emotions. I attribute this once more to your faith in the Lord; the presenting of your hearts to His Sacred Heart, above all in the Blessed Sacrament; your fervent devotion to the Blessed Mother, our patroness; and your inspiring dedication to your parish family.

Since this situation is now resolved, it is understandable that you would wish to have a new Pastor named to continue to advance the life and ministry of the parish. Until the Diocese is able to make more permanent provision for Our Lady of Sorrows, I will remain as Administrator of the parish, and it will be my privilege to be with you during this interim time.

I would like to conclude with something I said when I spoke to the parish in August. That is, neither the Church, nor our parish, nor we as sons and daughters of God are defined by challenging circumstances. At the cusp of the Season of Advent, we recall that the Word was made flesh and still dwells among us. Growing daily in our relationship with Jesus Christ, dwelling with Him at every moment and in every circumstance, is what defines us as Christians. Be assured of my prayers for each of you, as you endeavor to love the Lord more devoutly each day and to always remain with Him as we prepare to celebrate once more His humble birth among us and as we await His return in glory.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



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

November 26, 2025

**Bishop Steven J. Raica Statement Regarding Robert J. Sullivan**

In light of complaints made against him in July of this year, Father Robert J. Sullivan, of his own accord, submitted a petition to Pope Leo, requesting that he be dispensed from all the obligations arising from Holy Orders. As is the standard process for such petitions, the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith studied the request and presented the petition to the Holy Father, who subsequently granted the dispensation. With communication of Pope Leo's decision on November 24, 2025, Robert J. Sullivan is no longer a cleric in the Catholic Church and, thus, will no longer exercise ordained ministry.

The canonical investigation of the allegations, referred to the Dicastery in late summer, now concludes with this dispensation. A diocesan financial review, initiated at my request due to the significant payments alleged to have been made by then-Father Sullivan, was recently completed and found no link between the allegations and any diocesan, parish, or school funds.

These four months since the allegations surfaced have been challenging in the life of our local Church. Therefore, I am grateful for the patience and resilience of all who have been affected directly or indirectly by this matter. Please know of my spiritual closeness to each of you, and that the Lord will heal your hearts and fortify your trust in Him, Who desires to lead us all through the trials of life to the glories of Heaven.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Steven J. Raica  
Bishop of Birmingham in Alabama

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On June 14, 2002, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops confirmed the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. The Diocese of Birmingham affirms the goals of the charter. Sexual abuse of minors will not be tolerated, and any person who is aware of or suspects child abuse must report it to appropriate civil authorities and, if it involves ministry personnel of our diocese, to the Diocese of Birmingham Office of Child and Youth Protection: Al Manzella, Victim Assistance Coordinator at (205) 597-9058, Eugene Thibodeaux, Jr., Director at (205) 838-8322, ext. 323.