



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

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.