

**SOLEMN EPISCOPAL CONSECRATION AND INSTALLATION OF
THE MOST REVEREND JEFFREY MICHAEL FLEMING
AS COADJUTOR BISHOP OF GREAT FALLS-BILLINGS
HOLY SPIRIT CHURCH
GREAT FALLS, MONTANA
JUNE 22, 2022**

Your Eminence Cardinal Roger Mahony, Your Excellency Metropolitan Archbishop Alexander Sample of Portland, Your Excellency Archbishop Elden Curtis, former Archbishop of Omaha, Your Excellency Bishop Michael Warfel, Ordinary of Great Falls-Billings, Your Excellency Bishop Austin Vetter of Helena, Your Excellency Bishop George Thomas of Las Vegas (and former Bishop of Helena, My Brother Archbishops and Bishops, Dear Priests, Deacons, Consecrated Religious, and Lay Faithful of the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings, Montana.

I am truly pleased to be with you this afternoon in Great Falls-Billings for the Episcopal Consecration and Installation of Jeffrey Michael Fleming, native son of Montana, as Coadjutor Bishop-elect of Great Falls. It is an occasion to give thanks to God for the service of Bishop Michael Warfel, who for the past fourteen years has continued to shepherd the flock of this Diocese.

We should keep in mind that while the Diocese is extensive in an area encompassing two thirds of the State of Montana, 94,158 square miles, its Catholic population is of less than 32,000. The challenges faced in Eastern Montana in providing Pastoral Ministry to such a widespread and diverse number of people is quite significant (The travel time from the Chancery to many of the parishes is 7 hours or more). But, dear Bishop-elect, you are a man of great experience, many strengths, capabilities and talents. You have served the Church well in your parochial and administrative assignments, as Director of the Chancery, Vice Chancellor, and Adjutant Judicial Vicar, Moderator of the Curia and Chancellor, and subsequently pastor of St. Mary Parish in Helena.

The Church has just recently celebrated in this month of June the feast of Pentecost, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles. It was a unique moment in history whereby the mission of the Church, starting from the Cenacle room, an area that was so small, began to spread out and radically affect the lives of other people. But Pentecost is not limited to one day; it is meant for all time.

It was a moment of rebirth, a moment of great challenge. Today, in this Church, dedicated to the Holy Spirit, we witness the wonders of that same Spirit of Pentecost touching deeply once again through a successor of the Apostles a message of healing and hope, a message of comfort and peace. The Church is being challenged once again to spread an anointing over its people, to confirm and activate the power of God which arouses in the human heart a thirst and hunger for salvation, and subsequently to make disciples to announce the Good News of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. "Go, make disciples!"

Dear Bishop Fleming, accept with your whole heart and soul the work set before you to make the Gospel message come alive in the lives of your hearers.

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