



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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 22, 2020

Statement from Bishop Steven Raica concerning remarks attributed to Pope Francis on Civil Unions

I have heard the media reports about statements allegedly made by Pope Francis in a recent documentary in Italy. I have not seen the documentary, heard the questions that were asked of the Holy Father, or been able to verify whether his responses were accurately conveyed in their proper context. In any case, it appears, as the matter comes into greater focus, that he was in no way aiming to change Church teaching about human sexuality and marriage, but instead was offering his prudential judgment on matters of public policy concerning those who seek same-sex civil unions. Furthermore, the Pope's previous statements on this issue make clear that he in no way regards civil unions as the equivalent of marriage, which ought to be privileged in society, since it is the only institution essentially ordered to the procreation and education of children.

Here in the Diocese of Birmingham, we remain committed to promoting the Church's beautiful teachings on marriage, family, and sexuality, as well as insisting that all people be shown respect and compassion. As we await possible clarification or further elucidation from the Vatican on the pronouncements attributed to the Holy Father, let us remember to keep him and his important mission in our daily prayers.

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Established in 1969 under the patronage of St. Paul, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama is missionary in nature. As Church, its ministries and outreach encompass families, parishes, schools, associations, and a myriad of programs. The diocese is spread through 39 counties over a geographic area of 28,092 square miles in the northern part of Alabama. The Diocese of Birmingham is divided into seven deaneries with 56 parishes and 19 mission churches serving 104,837 Catholics. As a mission diocese, Catholics in the diocese represent only 3% of the general population. The diocese has one cathedral, the Cathedral of St. Paul, located in downtown Birmingham. The Office of the Bishop is located at the Chancery building, also in downtown Birmingham.