



**STATEMENT
FROM BISHOP STEVEN J. RAICA**

January 8, 2021

My dear sisters and brothers,

Who could believe what we have seen? The callous and aggressive takeover of the U.S. Capitol during an active session of Congress is an act of cowardice. It is truly appalling. It is one of many instances we witnessed in recent years. Our nation experienced incivility during congressional hearings and in our great cities like Portland, Seattle, New York, Chicago, and even our see city, Birmingham.

Provoking or inciting violence is no way to settle differences or historical injustices. Respectful dialogue, even passionate dialogue at times, while respecting the dignity of each person, seeks to find a common pathway toward understanding, reconciliation, solidarity and unity. As Christians we must, as our diocesan patron, St. Paul, urged the Roman Christian community, "Conquer evil with good" (*Rom 12:21*). That is an appropriate starting point for our reflection. Violence and hatred should not have any place in the life of a Christian or among those who aspire to greatness.

Throughout these past few weeks, we have been joyfully celebrating the birth of our Savior. We sang out with vigor: "Peace on earth, good will toward men" and "... peace to people of good will." Those radiant and inspiring sentiments are not meant to be hollow, empty words devoid of resolve. Rather, they are meant to raise our vision to a higher and more noble pursuit. Where Christ is found, true and enduring peace can be found!

My ardent prayer this New Year is that we strive for true and lasting peace recognizing that we are brothers and sisters all who share a common family and a common destiny. As we care for each other, may we fulfill our responsibilities under the protection of St. Joseph who provided for and protected the Holy Family.

Assuring you of my prayerful best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Steven J. Raica
Bishop of Birmingham in Alabama