

To my dear brothers and sisters of the Diocese of Saint Petersburg,

Greetings in the name of the risen Lord Jesus!

Today it was announced that the Holy Father, Pope Francis, appointed me the sixth Bishop of the Diocese Beaumont in Texas. As a son of the Diocese of Saint Petersburg for which I was ordained twenty-three years ago, it is difficult to say goodbye now that I will no longer be ministering in the Sunshine State. Everything I have learned as a parish priest, I have learned from you - from Saint Frances Cabrini in Spring Hill to Christ the King in Tampa, you have formed my shepherd's heart! To the recent alumni of our seminary, which I have served for 11 years, and to all of our seminarians, you have blessed my life and have continued to form me to be a better priest even as I was charged with your priestly formation.

To the priests, deacons, religious, and lay faithful with whom I have worked and to whom I have ministered, you are an inspiration to me and I will continue to count upon your prayers and friendship for many years to come. As I depart for my new mission in Texas, the beautiful and indelible memories of my life here cannot be erased by locale. Many family and friends are still here and so I look forward to visits back to this great diocese.

I humbly ask for your prayers for me, Saint Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary, and the Diocese of Beaumont as we will all face transitions in these challenging days for our country and world.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Bishop-Elect David L. Toups