

BISHOP ROBERT J. BAKER, STD

FILIAL SERVANT OF MARY

When it was officially announced that Bishop Baker of Charleston was appointed Bishop of Birmingham, Alabama, the August 16th 2007 issue of the Charleston diocesan paper, The Catholic Miscellany, front paged an interview with Bishop Baker by the editor. This article included his Marian devotion.

“Bishop Baker said he hopes to be remembered here for his emphasis on Mary. He established the Shrine of Our Lady of Joyful Hope in Kingstree and worked with the Vietnamese community to create a shrine to Mary in Greer.

“When the Blessed Mother is remembered, many blessings come to the diocese,’ he said. Bishop Baker hopes devotions to Mary flourish through Our Lady of Joyful Hope.”

During the homily on the occasion of the eremitic profession of Fr. Stanley Smolenski, the Shrine Director, Bishop Baker revealed that during prayer at one of his visits to the Shrine a thought was impressed on his mind: *“Leave your burdens here.”* He then requested that that expression be inscribed somewhere at the Shrine. It is found carved in stone before the outdoor grotto.

Bishop Baker took great interest in the history of evangelization in the Kingstree area, developed by Fr. Patrick Quinlan and Fr. Patrick Walsh, OP. In the early 1950’s Fr. Quinlan founded a catechuminate system through a series of chapels in the rural areas for farm families, while Fr. Walsh had a church-on-wheels, used for introducing the Catholic faith in predominantly Protestant areas. In the mid-1950’s Fr. Walsh was given the Springbank estate which he developed into a retreat center. Fr. Smolenski worked with both these priests before studying for the priesthood. And he has returned to develop the Shrine.

Bishop Baker considered those the golden years of evangelization of especially African-Americans in this diocese. Kingstree is an apt location for the Shrine of Our Lady of South Carolina, Our Lady of Joyful Hope.

PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF SOUTH CAROLINA, OUR LADY OF JOYFUL HOPE by Bishop Baker

To you, Our Lady of Joyful Hope, we entrust the priests, deacons, seminarians, religious men and women, and laity, and all the people of the State of South Carolina, in their joys and their sorrows, their triumphs and their defeats, their successes and their failures. As Mother of Christ and Mother of the Church, you are also Mother to all who call upon you in their need. You are the Mother of all races and all people.

Help our universal human family and all our families to draw closer together; help our youth to find meaning, purpose, and direction in life; help our fail elderly to know you are with them; help our sick, poor, abandoned, addicted, and unborn to be rescued by your love for them, reaching our through us.

Lead us all closer to your Son, our Lord, our Savior, and our God, who is present with us in the Most Holy Eucharist. Through our prayers to you, Mother of Joyful Hope, especially the prayer of the Rosary, help us to become people of hope and of joy, radiating God’s love for us always, in your Son, Jesus Christ. In His powerful name and with your special intercession we pray.

Amen.

Imprimatur
Most Rev. Robert J. Baker, S.T.D.
Bishop of Charleston
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