

Bishop Hicks' Column

November 2023

LAUNCHING OUR 75TH JUBILEE



A "JUBILEE" IS A SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY, marking a certain time period. For example, a twenty-fifth anniversary is universally recognized as a silver jubilee, whereas the fiftieth is known as the golden jubilee. This month, we are officially launching the 75th Anniversary of the Diocese of

Joliet, or the celebration of our diamond jubilee.

As they say, "diamonds are forever." This celebration gives us the opportunity to honor our past, commemorate our present, and look forward to the future with hope. Our year-long celebration will officially begin in December 2023 and end in December 2024. However, we have a few things happening in November that I would like to share with you and encourage your participation.

On Monday, November 6, 2023, we launched the first episode of a 14-part podcast series produced specifically for our 75th anniversary. In our pilot episode, Fr. Tom Paul, the chair of the Jubilee planning committee, and I talked about different ways that you can participate in our anniversary celebration. If you are a podcast aficionado, just listen on your favorite app by searching "Faith Into Action." Or you may try watching it on the diocesan YouTube channel. Either way, the links can always be found in the 75th Anniversary section of our website, diojoliet.org/75th, which can be read in English, Spanish, and Polish.

As we celebrate with great faith, hope, and love, I want to make sure we have many opportunities to pray together. A nine-day novena will begin on November 25, the Saturday after Thanksgiving. This Novena of Grace is based on the writings of the patron saint of our diocese, St. Francis Xavier. For daily prayers and devotions, visit the website or see your Sunday bulletin.

The novena concludes on December 3, 2023. On that same day we will host an event at the Blanchette Catholic Center at 1 p.m., where I will bless a new statue of St. Francis Xavier. He will beautifully welcome employees and visitors at the main entrance to our diocesan offices to remind us of our missionary call to share our faith with all people.

Then, for an entire year we will celebrate in ways that highlight my vision of catechesis, evangelization, and faith into action:

1. We will promote **catechesis** through faith formation to help the next generations **know about** Jesus and the Church. Through novenas, prayer cards, and lesson plans, we will grow the knowledge of our faith for all ages. We are blessed that our celebration is occurring in harmony with the three-year National Eucharistic Revival, which reminds us how the Eucharist is the source and summit of our lives.
2. We will also continue to **evangelize**, which is needed to truly know Jesus and **love** Him. True evangelization is realized when we believe in our minds, hearts, and souls that Jesus is real: He loves us, and we love Him. Through liturgies, prayers, media posts, podcasts, printed calendars, and commemorative books, we will actively **share** our faith and love of Jesus, who gives us eternal life through His life, suffering, death, and resurrection.
3. With catechesis and evangelization as our foundation, we will continue to put our **faith into action**. As Catholics, we **serve** the poor, the needy, and the marginalized. We speak for the unborn, the stranger, the abandoned, and those who are in most need of our care. As part of the 75th anniversary, I encourage all parishes to establish a day of service in the fall of 2024, responding to the various needs of each distinct community.

Jesus gave us such an incredible gift in the Church, and as baptized Christians, we are called to pass our faith on to the next generations. No one wants to belong to a Church that is merely surviving. Instead, we should have a burning desire to be a thriving Church that truly reflects God's light and God's love.

I encourage you to participate in some aspect of our 75th Jubilee during this next year. There is truly something for everyone, and I want each of you to know that YOU are a vital part of our celebration. So, together, rooted in Christ, let's live out the theme of our 75th anniversary: founded in faith, called to witness, and sent forth to serve!



From podcasts and youth events to service and prayer cards, scan the QR code or visit diojoliet.org/75th for the full list of events and activities surrounding the 75th anniversary.

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