



Bishop Hicks' Column January 2025

From Jubilee to Jubilee: A Path of Celebration and Renewal



A year ago, we launched the 75th Jubilee for the Diocese of Joliet. Gallantly, we announced we did not want this milestone to be a “one and done” event. Instead, we committed ourselves to a yearlong commemoration to remember our past, celebrate our present, and look to the future with hope.

Not only did we accomplish our goal, but we also did it exceptionally well. Throughout 2024, we spent the year catechizing, evangelizing, and putting our faith into action with podcasts, blogs, calendars, banners, interviews, special prayers, intentions, psalms, a curriculum for our schools and religious education programs, service projects, a speaker series, regional Masses, and participation in the Eucharistic Revival. We kicked off our Jubilee celebration in December 2023 with an all-Diocese mass and the unveiling and blessing of a new statue of our patron saint, Saint Francis Xavier, at the front entrance of our pastoral center. We concluded our Jubilee celebration this past December with an all-Diocese mass and a beautiful commemorative book. By all accounts, our yearlong Jubilee celebration was beautiful, well-organized, creative, faith-filled, uplifting, and robust.

With great faith and trust in the Lord, we now take our next steps into year 76 and beyond, following in the footsteps of Christ as Missionary Disciples. I have been asked, “Bishop, do we need to wait 25 years to celebrate another Jubilee?” Here’s the good news: while our local diocesan Jubilee has concluded, a new universal Jubilee has just begun

Pope Francis has gifted our worldwide Church by declaring a Jubilee year titled *Spes Non Confundit*, which in English means “Hope Does Not Disappoint.” It began with the opening of the Holy Door at St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome on Christmas Eve, 2024 and will end on January 6, 2026.

The theme of this universal Church Jubilee is *Pilgrims of Hope*, promoting peacebuilding in a world threatened by war, terrorism, poverty, and climate change. Our world needs true hope more than ever, and the Holy Father wisely recognizes that. He said, “Everyone knows what it is to hope. In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future may bring.”

During this Jubilee year, we are invited to make a pilgrimage to Rome to visit holy sites, perform pious works, and seek opportunities for reconciliation, indulgences, and other ways to strengthen and revive our faith. If you plan to travel to Rome during this Jubilee year, please consult the *U.S. Visitors to the Vatican* website at www.pnac.org/visitorsoffice/about-the-visitors-office/, which provides information to help you plan your pilgrimage for a truly prayerful experience.

While the Pope is excited about visitors to Rome during this special year, he also understands that, realistically, most people are not able to travel to the city of the Apostles Peter and Paul. Therefore, he encourages us all to celebrate in our local churches and communities.

In solidarity with the universal Jubilee year, we will be offering the following Masses here in the Diocese of Joliet:

- **Jubilee Mass for Deacons:** February 22, 2025, 11:00 a.m., Cathedral
- **Jubilee Mass for Persons with Disabilities:** June 1, 2025, 12:30 p.m., Cathedral
- **Jubilee Mass for Priests:** September 16, 2025 (for priests only during Convocation)
- **Jubilee Mass for Grandparents:** October 4, 2025, 11:00 a.m., Cathedral
- **Jubilee Mass for Consecrated Life:** October 5, 2025, 10:00 a.m., Blanchette Catholic Center (Invitation Only)
- **Jubilee Mass for Catechists:** October 19, 2025, 2:00 p.m., Cathedral

Pope Francis has asked that the Jubilee of 2025 be a "great symphony of prayer" throughout the world. Just as we prayed our beautiful 75th anniversary prayer for the Diocese of Joliet throughout 2024, let us now join the Holy Father in praying the Jubilee year of Hope prayer:

Father in heaven,
may the *faith* you have gifted us in
your son Jesus Christ, our brother,
and the flame of *charity*
kindled in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,
reawaken in us, the blessed *hope*
for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us
into diligent cultivators of the evangelical seeds
that make humanity and the cosmos rise
unto the confident expectation
of the new heavens and the new earth,
when with the powers of Evil overcome,
your glory shall be manifested eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee
reawaken in us, *Pilgrims of Hope*,
the yearning for heavenly treasures
and pour over all the earth
the joy and peace
of our Redeemer.

To you God blessed in eternity,
be praise and glory for ever and ever.
Amen.