

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

50 years ago today, the late Pope—Blessed John XXIII, signed the decree that officially established the Diocese of St. Catharines.

Throughout the entire diocese, we are marking this day as one of special celebration and prayer to thank God for the countless blessings we have received as a diocesan church across these 50 years. From Caledonia in the north west, to Fort Erie in the south east, and from Niagara–on-the-Lake to Walpole and Hagersville, the entire faith family that is the Diocese of St. Catharines has reason to mark this special day.

I know well that not everyone is able to be physically present at the Anniversary Mass being held at our Cathedral Church in St. Catharines today, but I want to be sure that you know you are very much included in this celebration. While I cannot be personally present in each of the 46 parishes that make up our diocese, through this video message I am able in a real sense to be part of the anniversary celebrations taking place in your community.

Our Golden Anniversary is a truly wonderful occasion to recall the rich story of how our faith family has grown over the years. That story deserves to be treasured and handed on to future generations. The faithful witness of countless men and women who have built up our parishes and our diocesan community is a cause for rejoicing.

But today, we are not only recalling past years—but looking towards our future, a future full of hope that the Lord has prepared for his Church. How important it is that we take up our challenge today to hand on with joy and zeal the treasure of faith we have received.

May God bless you, your families and loved ones, as we observe our Golden Jubilee.