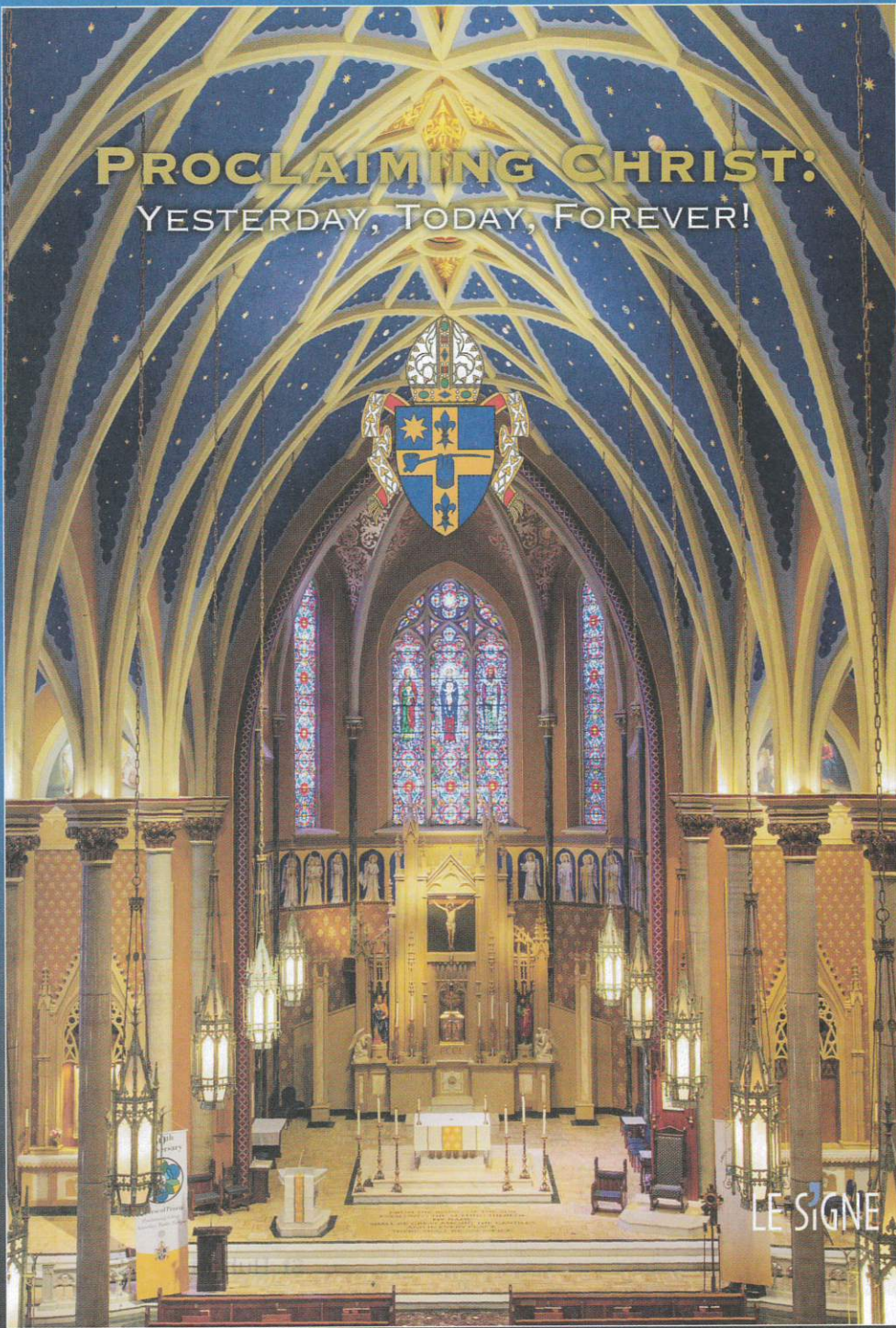


# PROCLAIMING CHRIST: YESTERDAY, TODAY, FOREVER!



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# PROCLAIMING CHRIST: YESTERDAY, TODAY, FOREVER!



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Diocese of Peoria, we give thanks to Almighty God for the abundant blessings he has poured out upon this local Church. For a century and a half, faithful men and women—priests, religious, and laity—have labored to plant and nurture the seeds of the Gospel across north central Illinois. Their sacrifices, courage, and steadfast witness have built the foundation upon which we stand today. We inherit a rich history, marked by devotion to Christ and a deep love for His Church.

Tracing the roots of the Catholic Faith in the area we now know as the Diocese of Peoria, we note that on April 11, 1675, Father Jacques Marquette celebrated the first Mass near Starved Rock in what we now call the town of Utica. The seeds of faith he planted grew to the extent that two hundred and fifty years later, the Diocese of Peoria was erected by Pope Blessed Pius IX. And by the grace and favor of God, we now celebrate the Sesquicentennial Anniversary of our Diocese!

Celebrating this milestone anniversary is an opportunity to look ahead with renewed hope. We take up the Lord's great commission to "Go make disciples" with a deep desire to be an evermore vibrant, mission-driven Church. Having discerned our path forward, we remain rooted in the Five Foundations that we have identified as essential for our growth: Evangelization, Discipleship, Vocations, the Eucharist, and the legacy of Venerable Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen. These foundations help to guide our steps on the path before us as we live out our faith in today's world and fulfill the mission Our Lord has entrusted to us.

May this 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary inspire us to express our gratitude for the past, instill confidence for the present labors, and enliven in us a joyful hope for the future. Together, let us Proclaim Christ: Yesterday, Today, Forever!

Peace and prayers,

Bishop Louis Tylka  
Bishop of Peoria



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