



Catholic Diocese of Peoria

September 9, 2026

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Historic Beatification of Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen Draws Pilgrims from Across the U.S. and Around the World

Three Weeks before Historic Celebration, 83 Bishops and More than 870 Priests are Registered; Nearly 45,000 Pilgrims From 48 States and 12 Countries Expected at Mass of Beatification; Tickets Still Available with Time Running Out

PEORIA, ILL. — With less than three weeks until the historic Mass of Beatification of Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, pilgrims from across the United States and around the world are preparing to gather in Peoria and St. Louis for nearly two weeks of prayer, celebration and events honoring one of the Catholic Church's most influential evangelists.

The Mass of Beatification will be celebrated Thursday, September 24, 2026, at 2 p.m. Central Time at The Dome at America's Center in St. Louis, Missouri. Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle will celebrate the Mass as the representative of Pope Leo XIV. Interest in the Mass of Beatification continues to grow. To date, 83 bishops and more than 870 priests have registered to participate, along with pilgrims traveling from 48 states and 12 countries.

Additional [tickets for the Beatification Mass](#) are available, but organizers are encouraging those who hope to attend not to wait.

"This is much more than a single celebration," said Bishop Louis Tylka, Diocese of Peoria. "It is an invitation to encounter Jesus Christ through the extraordinary witness of Archbishop Sheen. We are preparing to welcome pilgrims in Peoria and St. Louis from across our country and around the world, and I encourage anyone considering making this pilgrimage to join us. This is a moment in the life of the Church that we will remember for generations."

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Nine Days of Prayer in Peoria Before the Mass of Beatification

The celebration begins in Archbishop Sheen's home Diocese of Peoria on September 15 with a nine-day [Novena of Holy Hours](#) at the Cathedral of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception in Peoria, IL, where Sheen was ordained a priest and where his remains are entombed.

Each evening at 7 p.m., a different speaker will reflect on a theme central to Archbishop Sheen's spirituality and ministry:

September 15	Prayer: Jenny Witt, Witness to the Miracle Attributed to Archbishop Fulton Sheen
September 16	Education: Fr. Aquinas Guilbeau, Catholic University of America where Archbishop Fulton Sheen taught
September 17	Eucharist: Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens, Diocese of Crookston, the Founder and President of the National Eucharistic Congress
September 18	The Cross: Bishop Godfrey Mullen, OSB, Diocese of Belleville
September 19	Blessed Mother: Msgr. Jason Gray, Diocese of Peoria, Executive Director of the Archbishop Fulton Sheen Foundation
September 20	Priesthood: Fr. Chase Hilgenbrinck, Diocese of Peoria, Vocations Director
September 21	Evangelization: Bishop Louis Tylka, Diocese of Peoria
September 22	Missions: Holy Hour in the presence of Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, Papal Representative for the Mass of Beatification
September 23	Humility and the Call to Sainthood: Sr. Judith Ann Duvall, OSF, Chairperson of the Boards, OSF HealthCare

Registration is required for each Holy Hour at [CelebrateSheen.com](#).

A special [Family Holy Hour and Cathedral tours](#) will be held Saturday, September 19, from 10 a.m. to noon.

On Sunday, September 20, at 3 p.m., pilgrims are invited to a [special Mass](#) at the Cathedral of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception in Peoria, IL, commemorating the anniversary of Archbishop Fulton Sheen's ordination to the priesthood. Registration for this Mass is required at [CelebrateSheen.com](#).

A Full Day of Prayer and Celebration in St. Louis

On the eve of the Mass of Beatification, Wednesday, September 23, Archbishop Mitchell Rozanski, Archdiocese of St. Louis, will preside at Vespers at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis at 5 p.m., with Bishop Robert Barron, Diocese of Winona-Rochester and Founder of Word on Fire, serving as homilist.

Vespers will be livestreamed at [CelebrateSheen.com](https://celebratesheen.com).

Young adults are invited to a Holy Hour at the Basilica of Saint Louis, King of France (also known as the Old Cathedral) in St. Louis from 7:30 to 9 p.m. The Community of Franciscan Friars of the Renewal will lead an evening of Eucharistic Adoration, music, preaching and confessions. No registration is required.

Doors at The Dome at America's Center will open at 8 a.m. September 24, giving pilgrims six hours to pray, explore and prepare for the Beatification Mass.

The day will include Eucharistic Adoration, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and the [Sheen Expo](#), featuring Catholic organizations, ministries, publishers, artists, and exhibitors from across the country. The Sheen Expo will also feature "Who is the Man of the Shroud?", an interactive exhibit featuring a life-size replica of the Shroud of Turin, informative displays, and replicas of the weapons of the Passion.

At 10 a.m., the [Celebrate Sheen Show](#) begins, featuring music, testimony, and reflections on Sheen's life, faith, and continuing influence. Participants include:

- **Cardinal Timothy Dolan**, Archbishop Emeritus of New York
- **Sr. Josephine Garrett, CSFN**, speaker, author, and counselor
- **Msgr. Roger Landry**, National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in the United States
- **Katie Prejean McGrady**, award-winning author, speaker and SiriusXM Catholic Channel host
- **Matt Maher**, internationally known Catholic musician and songwriter

The procession for the Beatification Mass starts at 1:30 p.m., followed by the Mass at 2 p.m. Following the celebration, pilgrims will have an opportunity to venerate a relic of the newly Blessed Fulton Sheen from 4 to 6 p.m.

The Mass will also be available through livestream and broadcast for those unable to attend in person.

Celebration Returns to Peoria

Following the Mass Beatification, the celebration returns to Peoria September 25 and 26. On Friday, September 25, [Masses of Thanksgiving](#) will be celebrated throughout the day at the Cathedral of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception in Peoria. This is an opportunity for the faithful to give thanks to God for this historic grace.

Mass Time	Featured Guest
9 a.m.	Celebrated by Bishop Louis Tylka, Diocese of Peoria
11 a.m.	Mass Celebrated by Archbishop Ronald Hicks, Archdiocese of New York
1 p.m.	Celebrated by Bishop John S. Bonnici, Diocese of Rochester, NY
3 p.m.	Celebrated by Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Perry, Archdiocese of Chicago (retired)

Parishes throughout the Peoria area will also host [talks](#) examining Sheen's life, spirituality, and continuing legacy. More at [CelebrateSheen.com](#)

That evening, September 25, the first-ever [Sheen Awards Gala](#) will take place at 6 p.m. at the Peoria Civic Center in Peoria, IL. Inspired by Sheen's pioneering use of media to proclaim the Gospel, the awards honor Sheen's legacy by recognizing individuals who use their platforms to promote faith. Special guests announced for the Gala include:

- **Archbishop Gabriele Caccia**, Apostolic Nuncio (Ambassador of the Holy See) to the United States
- **Bishop Robert Barron**, Diocese of Winona-Rochester and founder of Word on Fire
- **Monsignor Roger Landry**, National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in the United States
- **Jonathon Roumie**, actor, *The Chosen*
- **David Henrie**, actor, writer and director
- **Katie Prejean McGrady**, award-winning author, speaker and SiriusXM Catholic Channel host
- **Paul Kim**, author of [A Catholic Guide to Adulting](#), Founder of the Triumph Men's Conference
- **Allessandro DiSanto**, CFO and co-founder of Hallow app

Additional presenters and honorees will be announced. Tickets are still available at CelebrateSheen.com. The Red Carpet will be livestreamed, and the Sheen Awards Gala will be available to view a week later.

Celebrations conclude Saturday, September 26, with additional [Masses of Thanksgiving](#) and a [Byzantine Divine Liturgy](#). All will take place at the Cathedral of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception in Peoria, IL. This is an opportunity for the faithful to give thanks to God for this historic grace.

Mass Times	Featured Guest
9 a.m.	Celebrated by Archbishop Gabriele Caccia, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, and homilist Msgr. Roger Landry, National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in the United States
11 a.m.	Celebrated by Msgr. Philip Halfacre, Diocese of Peoria, Vicar General
1 p.m.	Celebrated by Msgr. Jason Gray, Diocese of Peoria, Executive Director of the Archbishop Fulton Sheen Foundation
3 p.m.	Byzantine Divine Liturgy, celebrated by Bishop Robert Pipta of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Parma.

While in Peoria, Pilgrims can enjoy the [Beatification “Hometown Festival” Celebration](#) on the grounds of the Spalding Pastoral Center. The festival brings together Catholic organizations, artisans, musicians, podcasters, and the local community. Hours are Friday, September 25, from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Saturday, September 26, from 8 a.m. to 6 pm.

Organizers are encouraging pilgrims who want to participate in the historic celebration to make plans now. ***Tickets are available for the Beatification Mass and a number of the surrounding events, but availability is limited, and interest is expected to increase as September 24 approaches.***

Information about tickets, hotels, pilgrimage events, schedules, and the Mass of Beatification is available at CelebrateSheen.com.

About Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen:

Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen was born May 8, 1895, in El Paso, Illinois, and ordained a priest of the Diocese of Peoria in 1919. An internationally renowned preacher, author, missionary and broadcaster, Sheen served as national director of the Society for the Propagation of

the Faith and later as Bishop of Rochester, New York. His radio and television ministries brought Catholic teaching to millions and helped pioneer the use of modern media for evangelization. He died December 9, 1979. His remains are entombed at the Cathedral of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception in Peoria.

His Beatification moves Sheen one step closer to canonization and becoming the first American-born bishop to be declared a saint.

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About the Catholic Diocese of Peoria:

The Diocese of Peoria, led by Bishop Louis Tylka, serves Catholics of Central Illinois across 26 counties, rooted in its mission to become a vibrant, mission-driven, and sustainable Church. The Diocese lives its mission, embracing the call to “Go Make Disciples.” Learn more at cdop.org.

About the Archbishop Fulton Sheen Foundation:

The Archbishop Fulton Sheen Foundation is the official organization promoting the Cause for Canonization of Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen. Established under the auspices of the Diocese of Peoria, the Foundation is dedicated to preserving and sharing Sheen’s life, writings, and teachings, and to fostering devotion to his example of faith. Learn more at celebratesheen.com.