



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON
300 WYOMING AVENUE
SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA 18503-1279

Dear Members of the Faithful of the Church of Scranton,

Nearly eight years ago now, on the day that I was installed as the tenth Bishop of the Diocese of Scranton, I described the occasion in this way: "This day is about Jesus - and the legacy that he left to the world following his death and resurrection. It is about his pledge to give life, meaning and purpose to his followers through faith in his word and in the sacraments of the Church, especially the Eucharist. This day is about Jesus' challenge to his Church, his people, to proclaim his Gospel boldly in word and deed. This celebration reminds us of who we are as Church and of what we are called to do and to be."

In many ways, as we embark on this commemoration of the 150th Anniversary of the Founding of the Diocese of Scranton, these same words could apply to the whole year: "This year is about Jesus... the legacy of his life, death and resurrection." The pledge we claim in Jesus who gives life, meaning and purpose has been borne out in the real-life events, the struggles and the festivities, the history of his followers here in the eleven counties of northeastern and north central Pennsylvania. The challenge, the mission entrusted by Jesus to his Church "to proclaim the Gospel boldly in word and deed" has been met in generation after generation of those disciples who have journeyed in time before us and from whom we have inherited both the gift of faith and the responsibility to persist in the mission.

We embrace together soon a new liturgical year - a graced Anniversary Year -- marked by stories of historical import, actions which restore us and re-commit us to the founding vision of the reign of God, and gatherings which celebrate and remind us again of "who we are as Church and what we are called to do and to be" for our time and well into the future.

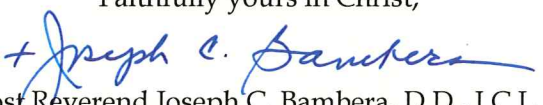
The commemoration of this Sesquicentennial - this 150th Anniversary Year - is framed in the theme, "The Journey Makes Us One." This unity as the pilgrim people of God refers to our one-ness across all the decades of our history, as well as to our one-ness even now as a richly diverse family of God united in heart and purpose. The theme also acknowledges that the journey is not complete -- that the human family, yes even all of creation, is still broken and yearning for the fullness of that unity which God intends and desires.

The planning for this 150th Anniversary of the Diocese of Scranton has been underway for nearly a year already. Now is the time for all of you to be invited into the many facets of your participation, and to add at the local parish level the features of the commemoration which are particular to your faith community. The design for the year has sought to keep these elements in mind: a) emphasizing gratitude to God in looking back; b) balancing between centralized and regional celebrations; c) highlighting lay founders and pioneers alongside clergy leaders; and d) underscoring the joy and hope in looking forward.

A great deal of additional information will be provided in *The Catholic Light*, on the Diocesan website, and in the parish participation kit mailed to each of our 120 parishes.

Be assured of my deep gratitude to God and to each one of you for the blessings which we will have the pleasure to recount and to celebrate in this 150th Anniversary Year. It is my fervent prayer that we will continue to grow in grace and wisdom as we journey together in the footsteps of Jesus.

Faithfully yours in Christ,


Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, D.D., J.C.L.
Bishop of Scranton