

Most Reverend Michael W. Fisher
Bishop of Buffalo

April 27, 2023

Hello, and thank you for joining me during this Easter season.

We've just finished the celebration of our 175th anniversary as a diocese. The year was marked by special Masses, celebrations, and pilgrimages.

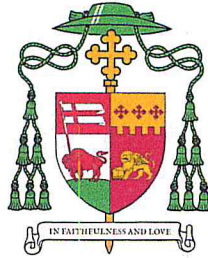
There's been a long legacy of our Catholic faith here in Western New York. Our men and women religious, who have come here to serve, have created this fabric of faith in our diocese. Immigrant communities were the foundation of our diocese, and they continue to build upon that legacy today.

I've had the great blessing to travel throughout our diocese, and have met with all of our priests, religious and laity as we celebrated special anniversary Masses. We've gone throughout the eight counties, from the Southern Tier to Niagara Falls, from Buffalo to Batavia. In all corners of the diocese, the commonality is the love that these people have for their parishes, their priests, and their legacy of faith.

I'm always impressed with how connected people are to their parishes. It often goes back generations. I've heard people talk about how their grandparents and their great grandparents have worshiped at the same churches for years and years. That's always interesting. I'm a student of history, so I always love to hear the history of a particular parish.

It's given me an appreciation of how deeply rooted our Catholic faith is among the people of our diocese, despite the challenges and issues that confront us. I think the negativity hits us extra hard because the church means so much to our people.

The conclusion of our celebration came this past Sunday at the Cathedral of St. Joseph where we had the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra come and celebrate in music. Music is such a beautiful part of our diocese. Some of my favorite experiences in the parishes this past year have been listening to the choirs. Many have been made up of members from multiple parishes. The music has been magnificent and has certainly lifted our hearts and prayers.



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When I think of our future, Hope is the word that comes to mind. Yes, we have deep challenges, but the Lord is speaking to us now in this generation and in this time. We are the church of 2023 and I think we have a lot to be thankful and grateful for. At the same time, we need to keep looking forward and think of how we will continue to educate our youth, and our adults, in the faith. How do we continue to promote Vocations? My hope is that we see more people responding to God's call to serve God's people, whether it be as priests, deacons, or religious, that we continue again to educate our youth and to continue to grow and bring people to Christ.

I look forward to seeing you at your parish,

+ Bishop Mike