



## **DIOCESE OF BELLEVILLE**

### **125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Bulletin**

The Diocese of Belleville was erected by His Holiness, Pope Leo XIII on January 7, 1887. On January 7, 2012, the Diocese will celebrate its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary. A variety of modest activities to commemorate this historic milestone are under consideration. A number of specific events spread throughout 2012 are already taking shape. These include:

**Fanning the Flame:** This is a diocesan initiative based in parishes and beyond, to strengthen Catholics, and those drawn to the Catholic faith, by exploring the richness of our faith and responding to the Father's call to lifelong conversion of the whole person to holiness and eternal life. In January 2012, the Diocese will begin a year long journey through the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults with readings, reflections, small group sharing, and virtual venues. The study is designed to be accessible, comprehensive, and relevant to contemporary life, by examining four pillars: the faith we Believe, Celebrate, Live, and Pray. The spiritual renewal sought in Fanning the Flame is about promoting ongoing conversion of hearts and minds resulting in lives that are lived increasingly conformed to the gospel and empowered by the grace that comes with a vibrant relationship with Christ and the Church. Preliminary partnering for prayer, participation, and support has already begun. Find out more at [www.ftfdiobelle.org](http://www.ftfdiobelle.org).

**A Diocesan Wide Celebration:** A Mass of Thanksgiving has been scheduled for 2:00 PM Sunday, April 29, 2012 at the Cathedral of St. Peter. Priests, deacons, religious and representatives of every parish in the Diocese will be invited by Bishop Braxton to gather in the mother Church of the Diocese and give thanks to God for the gift of the Catholic faith lived out each day by hundreds of thousands of faithful followers of Jesus Christ for a century and a quarter. During this celebration an outstanding member from each parish will be recognized.

**An Ecumenical Event:** A gathering of Catholics and their sisters and brothers of other Christian Traditions is being developed.

**Choral Concert:** Parish choirs will come together for a Spirit-filled festival of music. A full spectrum of church music, sacred songs and hymns will be presented by musicians from across the diocese.

**Vocations:** Everyone in the Diocese will be invited to participate in a renewed commitment to pray and work for vocations to the Priesthood and the religious Life.

**A Commemorative Anniversary Book:** Father Stanley J. Konieczny has been appointed General Editor of a 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Book which will celebrate the Christian faith by sharing the faith stories of all 117 parishes in the Diocese. Each parish will be represented by photographs and testimonies. Highlights of Diocesan history will also be included. Copies of the Anniversary Book will be available for purchase. However, the book is being prepared without any charge to the Diocese or to individual parishes, even if none of the books are sold. The book is being prepared and published by Edition Du Signe of Strasbourg, France, through an arrangement with Christian Riehl, President and Chairman. The company is nationally recognized for successfully preparing anniversary books for hundreds of dioceses in the United States and around the world. The high volume of sales in one Diocese offsets the low volume in another. The Diocese selected Edition Du Signe because no other publisher has an equal track record of success in this specialized field.

You may read more about these and other anniversary activities in future Anniversary Bulletins.

Bishop Braxton invites you to joining him in praying the Anniversary Prayer that is on the cover of the Diocesan Directory:

*“May we approach our Year of Jubilee with renewed faith.  
Please join me in praying for the well-being of all of the  
Christian Faithful of our Local Church. May we be blessed with  
an increase in vocations to the Priesthood, to the Diaconate, to  
the Religious Life, and to Lay Ecclesial Ministry! May we  
imitate the firm faith of Saint Peter, the Rock, on which Jesus  
Christ built His Church and the Patron Saint of our Diocese,  
whose “Keys to the Kingdom” grace our Diocesan Seal. May  
God grant us a renewed dedication to the Gospel of Jesus  
Christ. May we all love one another and all people as Christ  
loves us.”*