

**This week marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph. Catholics have been here a much longer time. The Vatican first learned about this area over 300 years ago and assigned it to the Diocese of Quebec. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century we belonged to two dioceses in Cuba before joining one called Louisiana and the Floridas. In 1826 we became part of the Diocese of St. Louis. So when the Parish of St. Munchin was founded in 1867 that was our diocese. But the following year the Diocese of St. Joseph was formed, and we moved into it. The Diocese of Kansas City was founded in 1880, but we remained in the Diocese of St. Joseph, along with St. Aloysius in Maysville, which was dedicated in 1890.**

**Fifty years ago, on August 29, 1956, the Vatican redistributed the diocesan boundaries of Missouri. Many people are saying that's when our 2 dioceses were joined, but that isn't quite correct. At the time we had 3 dioceses in Missouri: St. Louis, St. Joseph, and Kansas City. They weren't joined; they were cut up into four: St. Louis, Jefferson City, Springfield-Cape Girardeau and Kansas City-St. Joseph. Macon, for example, went from the Diocese of St. Joseph to Jefferson City. Branson went from the Diocese of Kansas City to Springfield-Cape Girardeau. On August 28 people went to bed in one diocese and woke up the next morning in another. St. Joseph lost its bishop, cathedral and chancery office. The cathedral still stands, but it is called the co-cathedral because there was another one in Kansas City, which became the headquarters for Catholics in northwest Missouri. This did not sit well with the people of St. Joseph, and we still sense some resistance between the two poles of our diocese.**

**The first bishop of the new diocese, Edwin O'Hara, had been the bishop of Kansas City. But less than two weeks later, O'Hara died in Italy. So the bishop of St. Joseph became the new bishop of Kansas City-St. Joseph, John Cody, who later became the Cardinal Archbishop of Chicago. John & Helen Farnan are celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary this weekend. They became one of the first couples to be married in the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, and one of the very few to be married when O'Hara was the bishop.**

**The work of a diocese is largely to give oversight. Parishes like to think we're independent, but we're not. What makes us Catholic is that we are part of a larger Church. Without a diocese there is no bishop, there are no priests, there is no ministry, and there is no parish. So even though we've been here longer than this diocese, it is the diocese that establishes our Catholic unity.**

**Today's responsorial psalm says, "One who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord." If you walk blamelessly, if you think the truth in your heart, if you do not slander with your tongue, if you do no harm to others, if you honor those who fear the Lord, and if you accept no bribes, you will never be disturbed. As individuals, as a parish, and as a diocese,**

**we strive every day to do justice and to live in the presence of the Lord.  
When we do, we will pass on our faith to the next generation.**