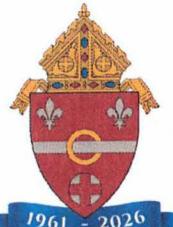


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1961 - 2026
THE ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF ALLENTOWN

CELEBRATING 65 YEARS

29 December 2025

The Fifth Day of the Octave of Christmas

***Letter of the Fifth Bishop of Allentown
Announcing the 65th Jubilee Anniversary Year of
the Diocese of Allentown
A Eucharistic and Marian Year of Grace***

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we approach the Sixty-Fifth Anniversary of the establishment of our beloved Diocese of Allentown, I invite you to join me in celebrating this milestone as a Jubilee Year of Grace, beginning 28 January 2026, and ending 28 January 2027. This sacred time will be a Eucharistic and Marian Year dedicated to giving thanks for the blessings we have received and imploring new graces for the future of our local Church, especially for vocations to the Priesthood and the Consecrated Religious Life.

Our Diocese was established by Pope Saint John XXIII on 28 January 1961, carved from the territory of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia to serve the faithful of Berks, Carbon, Lehigh, Northampton, and Schuylkill Counties. Since that day, generations of clergy, religious, and laity have worked together to build up a vibrant Catholic community rooted in faith, education, and service.

From our first Bishop, Most Reverend Joseph McShea, who laid the foundations of diocesan life and Catholic education; to his successors—Bishops Welsh, Cullen, and Barres—each shepherd has guided our Church through the joys and challenges of the times, ever striving to proclaim Christ in our region of Pennsylvania. Today, we continue to stand on that legacy, grateful for all who have handed on the Faith with

courage and love. The 65th Jubilee coincides beautifully with the Church's renewed call to deepen our love for the Most Holy Eucharist. The Holy Eucharist is the heart of our Diocese. Christ is truly present among us and is the source and summit of our Catholic life.

Throughout this Jubilee Year, I invite every parish, school, and household to rekindle devotion to the Holy Eucharist through increased opportunities for Adoration, Eucharistic processions, catechesis, and an intentional commitment to the reverent celebration of Holy Mass. Let us return to the altar with renewed awe and gratitude, that our parishes may be truly Eucharistic communities where faith is alive and charity overflows.

The Diocese has always been placed under the maternal care of the Blessed Virgin Mary under the title of *Mary, Mother of the Church*. During this Jubilee, we turn again to her as our Mother and Model of Faith. Just as she carried Jesus to the world, may she lead us to a deeper love of her Son and to a spirit of joyful discipleship.

I am also designating this year as a Marian Year, asking every parish to promote the Holy Rosary, Marian devotions, and consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In a world often marked by division and discouragement, Mary shows us the way to peace, humility, and trust in God's providence.

In a special way, I ask all the faithful to join me in praying for two great intentions during this Jubilee Year:

- An abundance of holy vocations to the Priesthood, Diaconate, and Consecrated Religious Life.

- The return of those who have drifted from the practice of the faith, that they may rediscover the salvation, mercy, and joy of Christ in His Church.

The Lord continues to call, and His mercy never tires. May our parishes become welcoming homes for all who seek spiritual comfort, forgiveness, and belonging.

As we celebrate sixty-five years of grace, we look back with gratitude and forward with hope. The same Holy Spirit who inspired the founding of our Diocese continues to guide us today. Let us walk together—clergy, religious, and laity—as a Roman Catholic family of faith, united in the Holy Eucharist, devoted to Mary, and steadfast in our mission of bringing the Light of Christ to every soul.

Through the intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church, and Saint Catharine of Siena, Patroness of our Cathedral, may this Jubilee Year be a time of renewal, healing, and joy for all of us.

With heartfelt gratitude and every prayerful good wish, I remain

Faithfully yours in Christ,

+ Alfred A. Schlert

✠ Most Reverend Alfred A. Schlert
Bishop of Allentown