There were joyful noises made unto the Lord in beautiful, historic St. John's Cathedral several days ago. The occasion was a happy and memorable one, for the Diocese of Lafayette was celebrating its 60th anniversary.

Many changes had taken place since the fledgling see had left the mother nest of the Archdiocese of New Orleans in 1918 and become a diocese with its own clergy ministering to more than 350,000 faithful in Acadiana. The late beloved Bishop Jules B. Jeanmard set the tone of Christianity in action. For 38 years this man of God labored indefatigably, His mark is indelibly imprinted in the Diocese by virtue of the hospitals, novitiates, a seminary, schools, orphanage and retreat houses that were established during his stewardship.

His episcopal successors proved eminently worthy of their task. Bishop Maurice Schexnayder and later Bishop Gerard Frey were equally dedicated and zealous in further strengthening the bonds of Catholicism. They were not isolated in ivory towers but instituted and encouraged the changes wrought by Vatican II. Because of their modernity, tempered with the unshakable faith of the true soldiers of Christ, they moved with the times. As a result the Diocese of Lafayette is as solidly and indisputably Catholic as it was in the days of the pioneer Acadian settlers.

The Rev. Auxiliary Bishop Harold Perry of New Orleans said it best at the solemn Mass in the Cathedral: "We have been blessed by the outstanding leadership and strong apostolic spirit" of the clergy. He lauded the lay people of the diocese who are the bedrock of the Church. Neither is there any doubt, as Gov. Edwards said, that the Church has contributed immeasurably to the spiritual and moral well-being of the people of Southwest Louisiana, and that Catholics are "justly proud and conscious of their rich spiritual heritage."

The Psalmist offered burnt sacrifices of fatlings, with the incense of rams; he offered bullocks with goats, because his heart was full of joy and wonder. Those present at the solemn ceremonies at St. John's Cathedral praised their Shepherd in that same spirit of David, singing forth the honor of his name and making his praise glorious.

In this age of ecumenism, it is meet and just that all of Acadiana, regardless of religious beliefs, join with the Church on this grand occasion and offer heartfelt wishes, as well as prayers, for unnumbered more years of dedicated service to Church and community.