

Catholic Diocese of Peoria

October 5, 2026

STATEMENT REGARDING MEETING WITH POPE LEO XIV

From Bishop Louis Tylka, Diocese of Peoria

“It was a profound joy and privilege to meet with our Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, and to present him with a relic of Blessed Fulton J. Sheen on behalf of the Diocese of Peoria and all those who have prayed for and supported Archbishop Sheen’s Cause. There is a beautiful tradition in the Catholic Church of presenting the Holy Father with the relics of the saints and blessed, and this particular moment carried special meaning for me. Pope Leo XIV has spoken of Archbishop Sheen on several occasions and has expressed his appreciation for Archbishop Sheen’s extraordinary witness of faith, his ability to proclaim the Gospel through the means of communication available in his time, and his missionary heart. In the days surrounding the Beatification, the Holy Father again pointed to Archbishop Sheen as an example of finding new ways to spread the Gospel.

I am deeply grateful for the Holy Father’s interest in Blessed Fulton Sheen and for his support that allowed us to celebrate this long-awaited Beatification. To place a relic of this son of the Diocese of Peoria into the hands of the first American pope, both of whom are from Illinois, was an especially moving moment. My hope is that this relic will serve as a reminder of who Fulton Sheen was and of the mission he embraced so completely: to bring Jesus Christ to the world. The Holy Father’s own interest in Archbishop Sheen reminds us that his witness continues to speak to the Church today and challenges all of us to proclaim the Gospel with the same conviction and joy.”

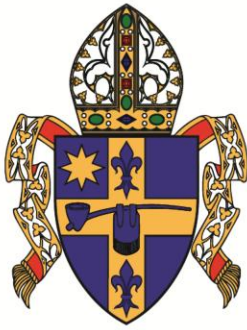
About the Catholic Diocese of Peoria:

The Diocese of Peoria, led by Bishop Louis Tylka, serves Catholics of Central Illinois across 26 counties, rooted in its mission to become a vibrant, mission-driven, and sustainable Church. The Diocese lives its mission, embracing the call to “Go Make Disciples.” Learn more at cdop.org.

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From Monsignor Jason Gray, Executive Director, Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen Foundation

“After working on the Cause of Blessed Fulton Sheen for 24 years since it opened in 2002, it was a great joy to participate in the recent Beatification and to share today the fruits from that joyful celebration with the Holy Father.

I was privileged to participate in the investigation of Sheen’s life and virtues and to direct the investigation of the miracle for Beatification. I was also fortunate to serve Pope Francis by working in the Dicastery of the Causes of Saints from 2012 to 2015. During this time, I assisted Cardinal Angelo Amato at the Beatification of Blessed Miriam Teresa Demjanovich, which was celebrated in 2014 in Newark, NJ. This experience was invaluable as we prepared to welcome Cardinal Luis Tagle for the Beatification of Archbishop Sheen.

Blessed Fulton Sheen met the various Popes during his life because of his work for the missions, both by raising money to help the poor and by visiting the faithful in remote and developing parts of the world. Archbishop Sheen served the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, which today is known as the Dicastery for Evangelization, headed by Cardinal Tagle, who celebrated the Beatification in St. Louis. I felt that Archbishop Sheen was with us in spirit when greeting Pope Leo. I am grateful that Pope Leo spoke so fondly of Archbishop Sheen, whom he remembered watching when he was young.”

About the Archbishop Fulton Sheen Foundation:

The Archbishop Fulton Sheen Foundation is the official organization promoting the Cause for Canonization of Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen. Established under the auspices of the Diocese of Peoria, the Foundation is dedicated to preserving and sharing Sheen’s life, writings, and teachings, and to fostering devotion to his example of faith.

Learn more at celebratesheen.com.

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