

# Family Faith Fest Honors 50-Year Anniversary Of St. Petersburg’s Diocese

By Amanda Boston



Bishop Gregory Parkes of the Diocese of St. Petersburg organized this free fest in honor of the Diocese’s 50 years of ministry.

A last minute change of venue did not stop 10,000 people from the Tampa Bay area from flooding the Florida State Fairgrounds on October 27. In celebration of 50 years of ministry, the Diocese of St. Petersburg held a free celebratory music and ministry festival.

Initially, the Family Faith Fest was to take place at Tampa’s Al Lopez Park, but due to a wetter than average fall, the grounds at the park were too saturated and posed a safety hazard. After 18 months of planning and only four days before the festivities were to kickoff, the fest was relocated.

Teresa L. Peterson, the Director of Communications at the Diocese of St. Petersburg, commented on the venue change, "God always has a plan, and it's always better than our plan, so we have to just trust Him."

"The Lord blessed us with a beautiful day. It's a day of fun, music, activities for the kids, great food and a time



to get together and celebrate our faith," said Bishop Gregory Parkes of the Diocese of St. Petersburg. "We wanted this to be a gift to the people—not just to those who are Catholic but to the community as well. So we extended an open arms invitation to everyone."

The main stage featured chart-topping Christian music artists Jeremy

Camp and Colton Dixon, along with other musical performers. Fest-goers could also visit the 'Educational Village' to learn about local schools or head over to the 'Ministry Village' to visit with representatives from a variety of charities. A secondary stage showcased cultural performances throughout the day celebrating the Diocese's diversity and history.

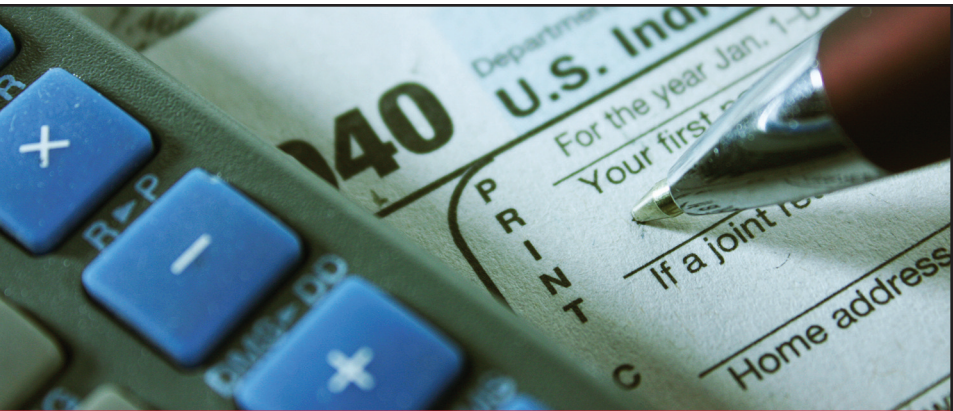


Jeremy Camp's scheduled performance was a massive draw for many attending the Family Faith Fest. Camp has 41 radio No. 1 hits and sold more than 4.5 million albums.

"We have such diversity in the church, and I love how we all come together from all different backgrounds to celebrate and worship Jesus Christ," said Peterson. "There're so many distractions in the world and this is just a time where we can focus on what's important."

Concluding the day was a celebration of Mass and Holy Communion with Bishop Parkes as the principal celebrant and concelebrants Bishop Robert Lynch; Monsignor Robert Morris, Vicar General; and Father Joseph Waters, Judicial Vicar.

The Diocese of St. Petersburg encompasses the counties of Pinellas, Hillsborough, Hernando, Pasco and Citrus and includes 74 parishes, six missions, 48 schools and early childhood centers and more. For further information about the Diocese, visit [www.dosp.org](http://www.dosp.org) or call 727-344-1611.



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