



DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

The Diocese of Grand Rapids is celebrating the 60th anniversary of the telecast of the Catholic Mass in West Michigan (1955-2015). In 1955 the diocese was one of the first in the nation to provide a weekly, live, televised Mass. Today, Sunday Mass is broadcast live on television and online from the [Cathedral of Saint Andrew](#) to hundreds of thousands of viewers across the diocese and beyond.



“The televised Mass has been a wonderful ministry to those who are homebound and incarcerated as well as others who are unable to attend Mass in person,” said Bishop David Walkowiak. “The Mass has also been a great tool of evangelization, providing people everywhere with an opportunity to witness and take part in the most sacred act of worship we have as Catholics.”

[View photo album](#)

[Fox17 coverage of the anniversary](#)

In 1953, the early days of local television, Father Hugh Michael Beahan (Father Mike) began a show on WOOD TV in Grand Rapids called “Fifteen with Father.” The program featured Father Mike in studio analyzing and discussing matters of current religious interest. In April 1955, from its studios, WOOD TV began televising Catholic Mass on Sundays. Father Mike served as producer, director and off-screen narrator of the Mass, providing a description of the rituals, which were mainly in Latin, as they occurred. A visiting priest celebrated the liturgy, while the congregants were from area parishes or local Catholic groups.

Thanks to a generous donation, in 1966 the Cathedral of Saint Andrew was equipped with cameras, a control room and broadcast equipment, so the Mass could be broadcast live from the church, making the Diocese of Grand Rapids one of the first in the nation to do so.

There have been many technological updates over the last 60 years, including wireless microphones, digital broadcast equipment and high definition cameras, which are now controlled remotely from the on-site control



DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

room. The entire ministry is generously supported by an annual diocesan-wide collection in the Diocese of Grand Rapids.

“We receive letters regularly from people across the area, thanking us for providing the televised Mass,” said Carl Apple, director of communications. “Most of the letters are hand-written, remarking that, if not for the broadcast, they would have no connection to the Mass at all.”

Mass from the Cathedral of Saint Andrew can currently be seen on FOX 17 at 10 a.m. every Sunday as well as live on the diocesan website, dioceseofgrandrapids.org and on the diocesan [Facebook page](#). Mass videos may be viewed on-demand on the website and at the "videos" link on Facebook.

Photo description: Father Beahan (with pipe) showing the high school girls around the WOOD TV studio with Father John A. Najdowski (left). (Jan. 1956)