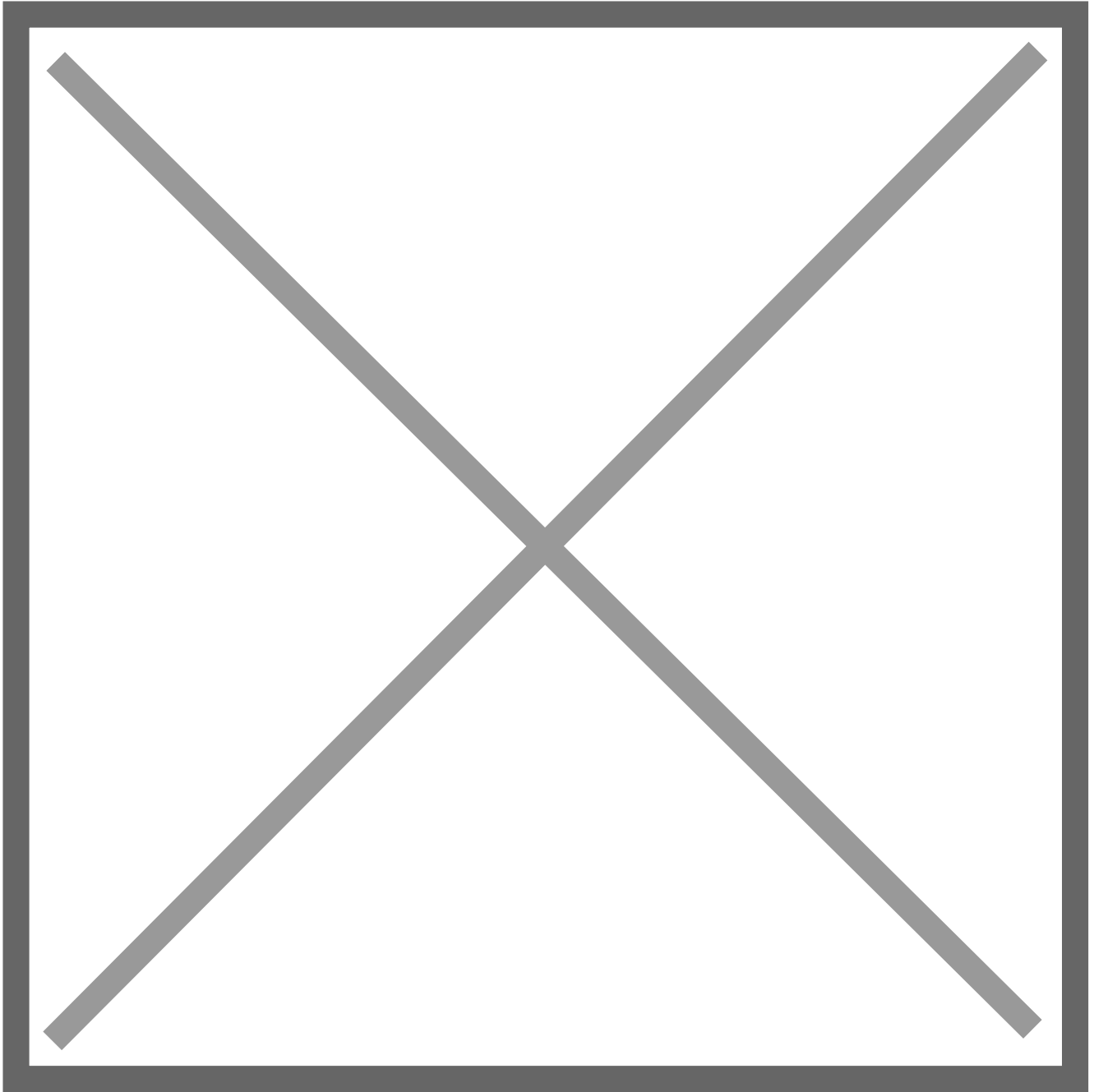


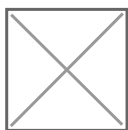
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American country music star Dolly Parton performs on the Pyramid Stage at Worthy Farm in Somerset, England, during the Glastonbury Festival June 29, 2014. The iconic singer-songwriter-actress, whose glittering country music stardom was matched by her pop fame and popular parallel careers in film and TV, died Aug. 25, 2026, at age 80, after a brief battle with cancer. (OSV News/Reuters/Cathal McNaughton)

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Knoxville, Tenn. — August 27, 2026

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The Diocese of Knoxville, Tennessee, is remembering the late Dolly Parton — whose career as a singer, songwriter, actress, businesswoman and philanthropist spanned decades — as "one of our own."

Bishop Mark Beckman said he was "very sorry to hear of her passing" and "praying for those who are mourning her loss."

"She made a wonderful contribution to our world and our community, and she will be greatly missed," said Beckman.

The 80-year-old Parton, whose many honors included 10 competitive Grammy Awards, a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award, and a National Medal of the Arts, died Aug. 25 at Nashville's Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center, following what her representatives described as a "brief battle with cancer."

Her late husband of 58 years, Carl Thomas Dean — whom she met at a laundromat in 1964 on her first day in Nashville — died in 2025 at the age of 82.

Born in 1946 in Locust Ridge, Tennessee, Parton — the fourth of 12 children — was "a daughter of Sevier County," said the Diocese of Knoxville in an Aug. 26 statement.

Parton spoke candidly about the poverty she and her family had experienced, as well as the faith and the musical gifts they shared in the heart of Appalachia.

As a child, she sang in both church and on television, even debuting at the Grand Ole Opry — the self-described "mother church of country music" — in 1959 when she was just 13.

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"Her life carried the spirit of our mountain home far beyond the Smokies," said the Diocese of Knoxville in its statement.

In particular, the diocese noted Parton's Imagination Library, which began in 1995 as an effort to provide books to children in Sevier County and now delivers free books to kids throughout the U.S., Canada, the United Kingdom, and Ireland. As of 2025, the library had distributed close to 305 million books in total.

Parton had launched the effort in honor of her father, a sharecropper who had never learned how to read or write.

"East Tennessee knew Dolly Parton as more than a world-famous star," said the diocese. "We knew her as one of our own. She was shaped by these hills and these churches. Her life shows what can grow from faith, perseverance, imagination, and love for one's neighbors — even from humble beginnings."

"Dolly was born and raised in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains," said the Diocese of Knoxville in its statement. "She first sang in a small Pentecostal church, long before the world knew her name. She never hid her faith. It showed up in the hymns she recorded across six decades, in how openly she talked about God."

Parton's choir-backed cover of Don Francisco's song "He's Alive" — which recounts the Resurrection from Peter's perspective — galvanized fans at the 1989 Country Music Awards, with Parton often performing and posting the song on social media over the years.

As she ascended in the entertainment industry — finding success in the fields of country and pop music, developing a career in film, launching multiple business enterprises and supporting numerous charitable efforts — Parton's impact spread.