



Office of the Bishop

Roman Catholic Diocese of Syracuse

240 E. Onondaga Street, Syracuse, NY 13202-2608

August 10, 2019

Feast of St. Lawrence, deacon & martyr

Dear Diocesan Family,

I want to take time on this particular day, to express to you what a treasure you are to me; and to thank you for making August 8th such a special day for me, for my family and friends, and for the Church of Syracuse. Your prayers, your good wishes, your kind gifts, and the hard work that went into my Ordination and Installation, will not be forgotten and are most appreciated!

As I stated in my closing remarks at the end of Mass on Thursday, it is my humble privilege to be called to serve you and to walk with you on the journey of faith, hope, and love. I sum up this journey with the words, "In the Name of Jesus" which I have chosen to be the motto of my ministry as a bishop. It is a journey I see us making together wherein we seek to radiate the light of the Gospel...the light of Jesus Christ...to those we meet along the way...to our neighbor.

An opportunity to do so will come as early as this week as the Child Victims Act opens a one-year window for litigation for all victims of child abuse in New York State. This legislation affects not only the Church, but other societal institutions and organizations as well. Collectively, we will experience afresh the pain of sacred trust violated and of the victims and their families whose spirits and lives have been so demoralized and harmed. To all victims, I once again in the name of the Diocese of Syracuse apologize most deeply and sincerely for the heinous acts perpetrated against them by their abusers who were supposed to be the caregiver of souls. I renew my own offer to meet with victims, if there is any way I can assist them in their search for healing and peace.

In the coming days and weeks, parishes and other diocesan institutions may be contacted concerning a civil lawsuit. We will turn all such matters over to legal counsel to ensure that they are handled properly and fairly. I am committed to be as forthcoming as we are able in such matters while respecting the confidentiality that accompanies the due process of law.

I think it is vital also to not forget the important strides this local Church has been taking in this area in trying to acknowledge its failures and seeking to ensure that our children are safe, including all that is being done for the Protection of Children and Young Adults and for Victims Assistance by the Diocese of Syracuse. An important component has been the Independent Reconciliation Compensation Program (IRCP) which invited victims through an independent process to be compensated for their hurt and suffering. Although we know that a program cannot take away the pain of abuse, it has been a means of reparation for harm done.

I know this might not be what one might think a first letter of a new bishop to his new family should be, but I have always considered myself a realist. This is where we are at on our journey as Church and so I ask myself and you, brothers and sisters, how can we make the light of Christ more real and let it cast out the darkness? For me, that is the mission ahead and so I rely on your prayers and assure you of mine.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Douglas J. Lucia
Bishop of Syracuse