



## ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SYRACUSE

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

240 E. ONONDAGA STREET, SYRACUSE, NY 13202-2608

August 27, 2025

Memorial of St. Monica, wife and mother

Dear Diocesan Family,

For over five years, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Syracuse has been pursuing means of making reparation for the pain and mistreatment experienced by the survivors of child and adult sexual abuse at the hands of adults, clerical and lay, who were entrusted with their care. As I have stated over the course of the five years and repeat again today, I cannot apologize enough for the abuse which happened or for any neglect in dealing with it.

However, I am able to announce today that the Honorable Wendy Kinsella, the chief U.S. bankruptcy judge for the Northern District of New York has ruled that she will accept the diocese's plan to exit our Chapter 11 case for reorganization and in the ensuing days will confirm the plan. This plan has been worked upon jointly by representatives of both the Diocese and the Official Committee of Unsecured Creditors and has received the full support of those representing the survivors and victims of sexual abuse.

A significant part of the plan will be the establishment of a 176 million dollar trust fund that will be administered by an independent trustee who will award compensation to the claims that have been put forward in these proceedings. As agreed upon in July 2023, the amount of the contribution to the Victims Trust Fund by the Catholic family of the Diocese of Syracuse will be 100 million dollars with 50 million dollars coming from the Diocese itself, 45 million dollars from its parishes, and 5 million dollars from other Catholic entities associated with the Diocese of Syracuse. In addition, Insurance Companies associated with the Diocese have agreed to contribute another 76 million dollars to the fund. Under the plan, parishes and other entities will have their individual claims settled in the same way as the diocese through a "channeling injunction." Thus, all claims will be settled from the same fund.

In addition, the plan also includes non-monetary items intended to strengthen our diocesan safe environment protocols to further ensure the past does not repeat itself and make further provisions to assist survivors on a journey towards healing. The lesson contained in today's gospel reading is most important to us in this moment. Jesus warns the religious establishment and leaders of his day against being "whitewashed tombs, which appear beautiful on the outside, but inside are full of dead men's bones and every kind of filth – filled with hypocrisy and evil-doing" (see Matthew 23:27-28). In short, as the Letter of James reminds the early Church, "faith without works is dead...is lifeless" (see James 2:17). This is something as Church we must remember as

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we emerge from Chapter 11 – we emerge to better live our Catholic Christian faith – and heed to the call to leave sin behind and to embrace the Universal Call to Holiness that is the heart of the Christian life.

I would be remiss in this moment if I did not express my sincere gratitude to Mrs. Danielle Cummings, Diocesan Chancellor, and Mr. Stephen Breen, Chief Fiscal Officer, for their long hours of laboring with Diocesan Counsel in drawing up this re-organization plan. Our thanks to Fr. John Kurgan, Vicar General, Fr. Joseph O'Connor and the Honorable John Brunetti, and to their legal counsel who represented the parishes in these proceedings and for their monumental task in drawing together the funding for the parishes' contribution to the trust fund.

I want to also recognize members of the Creditors Committee and their legal counsel who as we embarked on this journey, truly became collaborators in seeking to provide true recompense and healing to survivors and victims of sexual abuse. They certainly honed my listening skills but even more helped me to be a true shepherd of the flock, especially to those wounded and hurting.

Finally, to all of you my sisters and brothers, who throughout these five years have prayed for this resolution and for those whose hearts were broken by the betrayal that came at the hands of Church members, thank you! Together I now pray we will grow ever more as the Body of Christ in this part of the world community.

When Pope Leo XIV greeted the city and the world for the first time on May 8<sup>th</sup> of this year, he began by saying: "Peace be with you all." These words are now my simple greeting to all our diocesan family and to all whom have suffered so unjustly the sin of abuse: "Peace be with you all."

In the Name of Jesus,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Douglas J. Lucia". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. A small cross symbol is written to the left of the first letter of the first name.

Most Reverend Douglas J. Lucia  
Bishop of Syracuse