



ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SYRACUSE

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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

February 25, 2026

Dear Diocesan Family,

On June 19, 2020, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Syracuse began a journey of reparation, seeking to provide compensation for the pain and mistreatment experienced by survivors/victims of sexual abuse at the hands of those entrusted with their care. Throughout this Chapter 11 process, I have met with survivors who courageously shared their stories and expressed the depth of their pain. As your Bishop, words cannot adequately express my feelings and sorrow regarding such heinous behavior, but I again offer my most heartfelt apology to those who have suffered such harm and for any past neglect in addressing it.

During the last week of January, the Diocese of Syracuse conveyed its commitment to the Victims' Trust Fund. Including the \$76.1 million provided by our insurance carriers, a total of \$176.1 million will be awarded to survivors by an independent arbiter. The \$100 million portion from our "Catholic family" came from our parishes (\$45 million), other diocesan entities (\$5 million) and the Diocese itself (\$50 million) through a combination of investments and loans.

This afternoon, the Honorable Wendy Kinsella, Chief U.S. Bankruptcy Judge for the Northern District of New York, approved the Final Decree closing our Chapter 11 case. To ensure a comprehensive and just response, the plan utilizes a channeling injunction so that claims against the Diocese, parishes, and other entities in our Catholic family are resolved through the shared Victims' Trust Fund. This provides a unified path toward reparation rather than individual legal actions. Furthermore, the plan formalizes our commitment to Safe Environment policies, ensuring our protection protocols remain rigorous and effective in preventing a repetition of the past.

When we entered Chapter 11, we did not foresee how long this journey would take. I know the wait has been a significant burden for those who filed claims, and I am aware of the heaviness this has placed on the hearts of the faithful who have been scarred by this chapter in our local Church.

I would be remiss at this moment if I did not recognize those from our Diocesan staff who worked so laboriously to arrive at this day: Mrs. Danielle Cummings, Diocesan Chancellor, and Mr. Stephen Breen, Chief Fiscal Officer, for their tireless efforts in executing this reorganization plan; and their support staff, who allowed the mission of the Diocese to continue during such a disheartening time. My gratitude goes to our former Vicar General, Rev. Msgr. Timothy Elmer, for his early involvement, and to his successor, Rev. John Kurgan, along with Rev. Joseph

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O'Connor, the Honorable John Brunetti, and their legal counsel, who represented our parishes and other entities.

I am profoundly grateful to our parishes, other Catholic entities, and their leadership. The sacrificial nature of the contributions made to the Victims' Trust Fund represents a monumental commitment to justice and healing. We owe the aforementioned, along with those who coordinated this effort, a deep debt of gratitude for ensuring we could fulfill our collective responsibility to survivors.

I want to recognize also the members of the Creditors' Committee and their legal counsel, who became collaborators in seeking recompense and healing for survivors. They became companions on a difficult road, helping me as a Bishop reach out to the wounded. Thank you for the assistance you rendered even amidst your own grief.

Finally, I need to express my sincere gratitude and thankfulness to all members of our diocesan family and all people of goodwill who have prayed and offered encouragement, especially those whose hearts were broken by this betrayal. To our diocesan family, I apologize with profound sorrow for the scandal that they have had to endure with these revelations.

Above all, to God who is the Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer of Life, we raise a hymn of thanksgiving, accompanied by our prayers of contrition for the sins and negligence of the past. I invite our diocesan family, especially survivors of abuse and their families, to join me for a special Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Syracuse on **Sunday, April 26—Blue Sunday—at 2:00 pm**. On this Sunday, in conjunction with National Child Abuse Prevention Month, we join with faith communities across the country in a day of prayer for those affected by abuse. I welcome your participation in this Mass and the gathering that follows.

Beyond doubt, my heart continues to break for the damage that abuse has inflicted on the Church and its members. To the survivors and their families, I express genuine sorrowfulness and a firm resolve to ensure that future generations do not experience this scourge. The Catholic Church in the United States has made a "Promise to Protect" and a "Pledge to Heal." As part of that Church, we must remain ever vigilant.

With the promise of prayer, I remain

Faithfully yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Douglas J. Lucia". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Rev. Douglas J. Lucia
Bishop of Syracuse