



ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SYRACUSE

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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

November 23, 2025

Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

Dear Diocesan Family,

As we come to the final Sunday of the Church's liturgical year and prepare for our national feast of Thanksgiving on Thursday, I am aware of an event that is not so well known that will occur this week as well. On Wednesday, November 26th, the Diocese of Syracuse will celebrate the 139th anniversary of its foundation in 1886. This means that we will begin our 140th year of service to the people of Central New York – stretching forth from the Salt City to Oswego County to the Mohawk Valley to the Southern Tier.

An anniversary is an occasion for you and me to look both back at our history and towards the future, especially as we prepare for our Sesquicentennial (150th anniversary) in 2036. Therefore, I see the coming year as a time of reflection and listening to the Holy Spirit – of synodality – in this local Church. Our focus throughout our diocese whether in our churches or in our Diocesan offices will be two questions: (1) Where have we been? An accounting of our rich history, but also confessing what we have done and left undone as Church; and (2) Where are we going? Particularly, how are we growing in our communion with the Church universal and as the Body of Christ?

Throughout the last 139 years there is one thing that has sustained us on our journey – the Holy Eucharist. Therefore, first and foremost, I hope in all our churches we will seek to heed the recent words of Pope Leo XIV when he issued a call for renewed reverence for the liturgy of the Mass, saying it should "comply with established norms" that reflect the unity of the whole church. He said in his remarks, "The liturgy is 'the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed... the source from which all its power flows,'"

To this end, I would invite our parishes in the coming twelve months to focus on the Eucharist in two ways: (1) Catechesis for all ages on the Mass and the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist; and (2) a monthly Holy Hour in all parishes during which we pray for this local Church and its needs using the mottoes of the twelve bishops who have served the Diocese of Syracuse over these 140 years. Ready to reproduce materials will be available to parishes for each of these Holy Hours beginning in December.

The coming anniversary year will also be an opportune time for our parishes and Pastoral Care Areas (PCAs) in our vicariates to further hone our listening skills by gathering leadership and parishioners alike in synodality to chart a course together towards 2036. Sr. Katie Eiffe, CSJ, Director of Synodal Planning, will provide parishes and PCAs with a working guide for these discussions. Certainly, the data collected from the DMI Survey conducted in Lent by the Catholic Leadership Institute can be of great assistance in these sessions as we seek together to make the Diocese of Syracuse a living Gospel for all people to hear.

The theme chosen for this anniversary year is the title of a Gospel Spiritual of the 19th century, "Give Me Jesus." In reflecting on this simple phrase, the bishops of South America have written:

Faith • Hope • Charity

"Knowing Jesus is the best gift that any person can receive; that we have encountered Him is the best thing that has happened in our lives, and making him known by our word and deeds is our joy." It is this thought that we wish to be at the center of our year-long journey, as we call to mind our past and look towards the future as a diocesan family.

On Wednesday, November 26th, at the Noon Mass in our diocesan cathedral dedicated to the Immaculate Conception, I will be joined by the diocesan staff as we give thanks for our 139 years of service and inaugurate our anniversary year. All are welcome to join us for this Mass in person or through YouTube, but most of all we invite you to join us in prayer.

To this end, I share with you the prayer that has been composed for the anniversary year:

O God of endless ages,
our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
be with this diocesan family,
as we prepare to celebrate
the 140th anniversary of
the foundation of the
Diocese of Syracuse.

We give thanks and praise,
for the seeds of the Gospel
that have been sown
in this central part of New York State,
and ask that they continue
to be nurtured,
so that together we may be
a living Gospel in word and deed.

We pray as we seek Jesus
that we might grow ever deeper
in our relationship with our Eucharistic Lord,
and that our worship will draw us
to greater unity in Christ.

Help us to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus
and to do whatever he tells us.
So that together we will be
one endless chorus
praising Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
now and forever. Amen.

In the Name of Jesus,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Douglas J. Lucia". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. Above the first name, there is a small cross symbol.

Most Reverend Douglas J. Lucia
Bishop of Syracuse