



ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SYRACUSE

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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

May 26, 2024
The Most Holy Trinity

Dear Diocesan Family,

“Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit!”

On Pentecost 2022, I announced the formation of new Vicariates for the Diocese to foster greater collaboration between the parishes of a Pastoral Care Area (PCA); as well as the adoption of a team approach to forming disciples. Over the last two years, this vision has been taking shape as the groundwork for these cooperative efforts has been proceeding both on the diocesan and parish levels.

This Lord’s Day, I write to share with you that with the announcement of the pastoral assignments being made this weekend – that a new benchmark is being reached in these collaborative efforts. Rather than just filling openings, these new assignments represent cooperative efforts at the parish level to bring forth the community of Love that is the very essence of the Holy Trinity, of our God! The Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – models for us what the human community is called to be – a community of love. Just like the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity are united in love, we, who have been created in God’s image, are called to live in love for one another. And this love goes deeper than mere fleeting emotions or parish boundaries!

Most assuredly, with teamwork comes growing pains. The synodal listening we have been part of at the diocesan level is essential at the parish level in order to appreciate the legitimate needs and concerns of the faithful; and vice-versa, the human limitations of pastoral leaders. For instance, the number of weekend Masses should be dictated by the number of priests, what ministries are needed to provide a quality worship experience, the size of the worship space, and a schedule that serves the various needs of the populace. It can’t be based simply on the fact that we have always had a 4 pm Saturday Vigil Mass; or as the saying goes, “We have always done it that way...”

As within families, things change as needs arise. It is no different in the family of the Church! However, it is always better if there can be conversations and planning to accompany such changes. This is what we have been seeking throughout the Diocesan Planning Process, but especially within the last two years at the Vicariate/Parish/PCA level. As mentioned, such conversations have led to some of the new pastoral assignments being announced this weekend while acknowledging further teamwork will be essential!

Faith • Hope • Charity

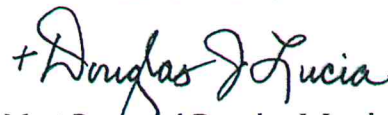
So let me share with you a few highlights:

- The parishes of St. Augustine, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, and St. Mary of the Assumption in Baldwinsville will be served by a Pastoral Team that will include two priests, deacons, lay leaders, etc. The model for this setup is the one being used in the Spirit of Hope Catholic Community in Oneida.
- The parishes of Immaculate Conception in Fayetteville and St. Ann's in Manlius will build a Pastoral Team that will include one Pastor for both churches, deacons, and lay leaders. In this instance, this model arises from the geographical proximity of the two parishes and a common school district. Its implementation was dependent on a planned retirement from pastoral responsibilities.
- The new administrator of the Church of Our Lady of Pompei/St. Peter and St. John the Baptist/Holy Trinity will be working in tandem with the Conventual Franciscan Community at Assumption of the Virgin Mary to provide a renewed vision for parochial ministry on the Northside of Syracuse.
- In the Southern Tier, St. Vincent de Paul/Blessed Sacrament Church in Vestal and the Parish of Saints John and Andrew in Binghamton, will honor the work they have done towards greater cooperation by sharing the same pastor.
- In Rome, during the next twelve months, the parishes of St. John the Baptist, St. Mary-St. Peter, and St. Paul will be working towards their union into one city-wide parish on July 1, 2025.
- In Utica, the parishes of St. Peter's and St. Mark's are coming together to create one new parish in north Utica and are considering a variety of factors to determine its site as they prepare for its establishment on July 1, 2025.

These are illustrations where already members of our Diocesan Family are seeking to be the Pilgrims of Hope that Pope Francis is calling us to be in the upcoming Jubilee Year of 2025. In a very powerful letter announcing this occasion, the Holy Father wrote: *"We are about to make a pilgrimage marked by great events, in which the grace of God precedes and accompanies his people as they press forward firm in faith, active in charity and steadfast in hope (cf. 1 Thess 1:3)"* (#6).

Together, let us continue to prayerfully support such discipleship within our Diocese. Thank you for your own participation in it!

In the Name of Jesus,

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 Reverend Douglas J. Lucia
Bishop of Syracuse