



ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SYRACUSE

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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

January 28, 2025

St. Thomas Aquinas, Doctor & Priest

Dear Diocesan Family,

Our gospel reading this past Sunday – dedicated to the Word of God – focused on the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry. He used the words of the Prophet Isaiah to describe what he was to be about, *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord”* (Lk 4:18-19). Luke tells us that the immediate response of those who heard him utter those words in that synagogue *“spoke highly of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth”* (Luke 4:22).

Yet, here is the irony, within six verses of this moment the congregants were filled with fury, wanted Jesus out of town, and were even ready to throw him off a cliff (see Luke 4:28-29). What changed their mood so quickly? Simply put, he challenged those in that synagogue not simply to listen to the Word of God, but to put it into action – and those he used as examples to help make his point happened to be foreigners.

I don’t think I can find a better introduction to a controversial subject that is the talk of our nation – foreign policy and immigration. I know that there are people, including those in government, who may feel that the Church needs to stay out of these matters. Nonetheless, Jesus’ own ministry illustrates for you and me that the opposite is true. As disciples, we are called to continue the mission of Jesus which he summed up at its very beginning with those words from Isaiah, the prophet.

Particularly by using the example of foreigners in speaking of this mission, Jesus wanted his fellow believers not to forget about the absolute sacredness of the human person made in the very image and likeness of our Divine Creator. Then and now, Jesus reminds you and me that today is the perfect opportunity to re-examine our treatment of those who are neighbor to us whether locally or globally while seeking to address the complexity of border and immigration issues.

To this end, I now introduce to you my second pastoral letter, *“With Liberty and Justice for All,”* that is meant to be a reflection of how you and I can be ever faithful to the call to do all *“In the Name of Jesus”* in the present moment. I invite you to read the letter and use it in your

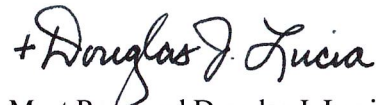
Faith • Hope • Charity

prayer and for dialogue with others. It is okay if we wrestle with its content, but as Luke 4:30 suggests Jesus will show us a pathway through it all. The important thing is to be open to what the Spirit is telling us.

I ask us to be particularly sensitive to those among us who are filled with fear and mistrust these days and to be respectful of our neighbors in the language we use towards and with them. Let us truly listen to one another and not forget that together we are called to work for the common good of all our neighbors, domestic and foreign. Pope Francis in his message to President Trump on Inauguration Day invited our nation to be at the forefront “in promoting peace and reconciliation among peoples.” As we pray in the Preface of the Mass used on Independence Day (July 4): “[Jesus’] message lives on in our midst as our task for today and a promise for tomorrow.”

Please know of my prayers for you and your loved ones but especially let us in charity not forget the outcasts of our day, as we follow the example of Jesus in the lands he walked.

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 small cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Douglas J. Lucia
Bishop of Syracuse