



ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SYRACUSE

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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

May 25, 2026

Mary, Mother of the Church

Dear Diocesan Family,

In the coming weeks, our nation will celebrate the semiquincentennial anniversary of its birth on July 4, 2026. On June 11, 2026, as part of the celebration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. bishops (USCCB) at the Shrine of Mary, Queen of the Universe, in Orlando, FL will consecrate the United States of America to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. At the same time, dioceses and parishes around the country are encouraged to join the bishops in celebrating the consecration of our nation to the Sacred Heart.

In conjunction with these festivities, I would like to invite the clergy and laity of the Diocese of Syracuse to participate in the following manner:

- I. Join the U.S. Church from **June 3-11** in praying the Novena to the Sacred Heart, which will conclude with the consecration of the United States to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The Novena is available through the USCCB website (www.usccb.org), our own diocesan social media sites, and I would ask that some printed copies be available in parish churches.
- II. Join me on the **Solemnity of the Sacred Heart (Friday, June 12) at the 12 Noon Mass** in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Syracuse when I will conclude Mass with the consecration of the Diocese of Syracuse to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.
- III. Resources are available on the USCCB website for local celebrations of the Consecration in individual parishes as well.
- IV. In the week leading up to Saturday, July 4th, I would like each of the vicariates of the Diocese to host in one of its churches, **"A Holy Hour for the Nation."** This hour of prayer is meant to focus our attention that we are "one nation under God" and pray for the wisdom and courage to be the living gospel in the public square. Sample holy hours are available at the USCCB website; and the Diocesan Office of Worship will also provide a Holy Hour template for the occasion.

Faith • Hope • Charity

- V. The USCCB is also promoting the ideas of “250 Hours of Adoration” and “250 Works of Mercy” in preparation for this year’s milestone in our nation’s history. Again, more information can be found at www.usccb.org.
- VI. In the diocese, I would like to promote as well, the “Enthronement of the Sacred Heart of Jesus” in the homes of our parishioners. Resources for this devotional practice can be found on the web, including the websites of the Knights of Columbus and REVIVE Hope and Healing Ministries, Inc.
- VII. Finally, **on the weekend of July 4 and 5, 2026**, I am granting permission to use within the Diocese of Syracuse, the Mass orations, preface, and solemn blessing for Independence Day, while retaining the use of the readings for the 14th Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year A (which are most appropriate). White or green vestments may be worn for this occasion.

The summer months can be packed, but they also are an opportune occasion for all of us to catch our breath and spend time with those we love, including our Lord and God. I hope you will take full advantage of the aforementioned opportunities for prayer and know that I will be accompanying you in them. May God continue to bless our beloved nation and help us to grow in love of God and neighbor!

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 Rev. Douglas J. Lucia
Bishop of Syracuse