



ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SYRACUSE

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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

16 June 2026

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The parishes of Our Lady of Lourdes (est. 1919) and Our Lady of the Rosary (est. 1949) have tended to the pastoral needs of the people of Utica and New Hartford for some time. These parishes have remarkable and beautiful histories. More importantly, they are places where God is worshiped, the Good News of his love and salvation is lived and shared, and those in need are served.

For nearly ten years, your pastors, parish trustees, and the members of your parish and finance councils have been considering the future of your parishes in the life and mission of the Church, which has experienced a seismic shift from Christendom (a time when Christianity and the culture aligned and Christians lived the Christian life) to Apostolic Mission (a time when both Christianity and the culture need to be reinvigorated with the Good News of God's love and salvation in Christ). You, the parishioners, were also invited to consider the future of your parishes at multiple Town Hall Meetings and in various other ways.

Consequently, these - your - parishes first began working together in 2014 and then came together as Mary, Mother of Our Savior in 2021. Since that time you have continued to assess your situation and take many active and commendable steps to be good stewards of your limited resources in order to focus on mission.

Recently, your pastor, Father Hage, reviewed with you various maintenance issues concerning the church of our Lady of the Rosary along with the limited financial resources available to address them now and for years to come. As a result, your trustees, finance council, pastoral council, and many of you have come to the conclusion that it is no longer possible to maintain Our Lady of the Rosary as an auxiliary church of Mary, Mother of our Savior.

Consequently, Father Hage has requested from me that the church of Our Lady of the Rosary be relegated to profane but not sordid use (closed) so that it can eventually be alienated (sold).

I have decided to grant this request. The Decree of Modification-Relegation is attached.

Faith • Hope • Charity

I am grateful to Father Salerno and Father Hage, the parish trustees, the members of the pastoral and finance councils, and to all of you for navigating these challenging times with faith and trust in the Lord. I am confident that this decision will help provide stable pastoral care as you continue to carry out the mission of the Church.

Parishes and churches are a significant part of our history and tradition and the loss of individual identity is certainly sad and something to be mourned. At the same time, it is a reminder that the Church is not merely a parish or a building, but the Body of Christ. When we are united in him we experience God's love and salvation – a tremendous grace and blessing that transcends all space and time!

The “Dogmatic Constitution on the Church” (*Lumen Gentium*) of the Second Vatican Council reminds us that “the Eucharist is the source and the summit of the Christian life” (no. 11) and is a “sacrament of unity.” St. Peter Julian Eymard, a priest who devoted his life to helping people appreciate the Holy Eucharist, has stated: “Know, O Christian, that the Mass is the holiest act of religion. You cannot do anything to glorify God more, nor profit your soul more, than by devoutly assisting at it, and assisting as often as possible.” I would like to take this opportunity to invite you not to forget the importance of the Mass in your life as a Catholic Christian and the importance of joining in its celebration on Sundays (the Lord's Day) and Holy days of Obligation wherever it is offered.

May the Lord bless you and fill you with the grace you need to be his witnesses moving forward as disciples and a parish on mission.

Be assured of my continued prayers for all of you.

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