



ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SYRACUSE

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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

*****To be read at all Masses on the weekend of May 31st and June 1st*****

May 30, 2025

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

On the last day of May, the Church universal calls to mind the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary to her cousin Elizabeth to support her in her pregnancy at an advanced age in life. This feast reminds us once again of the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death, but even more of our mission as disciples of the Lord Jesus to support and care for one another at all stages of life.

Sadly, in New York State, such care for life in all its stages is again being threatened by "New York State Senate Bill S138 (medical aid in dying act)." I acknowledge that the situations this bill attempts to address are very emotional and painful ones for individuals and families.

Yet, I refer to the joint letter of the Catholic Bishops of New York State on this bill: "One only need to look to the example of our neighbor to the north, Canada, to understand the risk. That country passed a similar law to New York's bill in 2016. Within a few short years, it was expanded to allow not only those with terminal illnesses, but also those with 'chronic' illnesses, such as arthritis, to end their lives. In 2027, the law is set to expand to those whose only underlying condition is mental illness, such as depression, anxiety or anorexia.... Sadly, we are facing a suicide crisis among young people in our state, and the government rightly spends large sums of money to prevent these tragedies and to deliver a consistent message that life is worth living. Now our state will be telling its citizens that some lives – perhaps where there has been a loss of autonomy or a disability – are *not* worth living."

I would ask you to please consider such concerns and for you to reach out personally to your representatives in Albany as I have done so recently on two occasions asking them not to allow passage of this bill. As Pope St. John Paul II stated in his encyclical, *The Gospel of Life (Evangelium Vitae)*: "As explicitly formulated, the precept 'You shall not kill' is strongly negative: it indicates the extreme limit which can never be exceeded. Implicitly, however, it encourages a positive attitude of absolute respect for life; it leads to the promotion of life and to progress along the way of a love which gives, receives and serves" (#54).

Please do not remain silent on this matter. Together let us work and pray to safeguard the sanctity of human life from its conception to its natural end.

In the Name of Jesus,

Most Reverend Douglas J. Lucia
Bishop of Syracuse

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