

Statement of Bishop-elect Douglas J. Lucia
Press Conference
June 4, 2019

Today, I stand before all you still in shock over the occasion that brings us together. In truth, I have never stood before so many cameras and microphones, but I appreciate all of you for being here for this announcement.

You would be correct in stating that this appointment as the Eleventh Bishop of Syracuse comes as a total surprise to me. I have had no clue whatsoever that my life was going to change so dramatically.

But that being said, here I am! I want to begin by expressing my gratitude to His Holiness, Pope Francis, for gifting me with this precious portion of God's flock and confidence he has placed in me in asking me to be her shepherd. I assure the Holy Father of my communion with him and the College of Bishops, along with the promise of daily prayer for his Petrine ministry.

Next, I want to thank Bishop Cunningham for his warm welcome and for his generous support over these last few days as I tried to figure out what I was supposed to do while maintaining strict confidentiality. Little did I ever expect that 15 years after welcoming Bishop Cunningham to Ogdensburg and assisting him with the transition in his life, that he would be doing the same for me here in Syracuse. It just so happened without either one of us knowing the forthcoming appointment that I was seated directly across from the bishop in our cathedral at his Golden Jubilee celebration.

Bishop Cunningham knows already that I will need his wise counsel as I seek to care for the Church, Our Mother as he did. But also, I have promised him that I want him to enjoy retirement. Again, Bishop Cunningham, thank you for the friendship that we share and I am looking forward to you being in the neighborhood.

My next words of gratitude are addressed to Bishop Terry La Valley and to the clergy, religious and lay faithful of the Diocese of Ogdensburg who have helped form me into the man and priest I am today. Bishop La Valley has been a treasured friend since our seminary days. He has spurred me on to greater holiness since our earliest days in priesthood and continues to challenge me in my service of the People of God (along with getting enough exercise) through his personal example. The priests, deacons, religious, and laity of the Diocese of Ogdensburg have been true companions on the journey and I am most grateful for their love and support along the way.

Family is important to me and I want to publicly thank my parents for being for me and my siblings the first teachers in the faith by their own example. On the bottom of the chalice which my family gave me when I was ordained as a priest are the words: "Ordained to God's Service." These words have been a beacon for the past thirty years of my priestly ministry and they set the stage for the next part of the journey with you. I am here to serve the people of the Diocese of Syracuse, Catholic and non-Catholic alike. I look forward to getting to know you and you

getting to know me. I can tell you that one of my first priorities will be to visit folks in their parishes.

Since receiving the call from Archbishop Christophe Pierre, the papal nuncio to the US, and to whom I am grateful also for his kind assurance and solicitude, I have been wondering what the motto for my service as a bishop would be. The words that kept coming to me were: "In the Name of Jesus." They are taken from the third chapter of the Acts of the Apostles and reference the greatest gift Peter could give someone along the way, to show the healing and merciful face of God. That is my simple prayer for my time of service in the Diocese.

Please pray for me and know that I have already begun to do so for you since my initial conversation with Archbishop Pierre. Again, thank you for your presence here today.

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