



## ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SYRACUSE

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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

26 June 2025

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Saint John has been tending to the pastoral needs of the people of North Bay since it was founded as a mission of Saint Mary, Cleveland in 1949. More recently, it has been serving the people who are part of the parish of Spirit of Hope, which was formed in 2023, albeit by request or only when needed. It has a wonderful history. More importantly, it has been a place where God is worshiped, the Good News of his love and salvation are lived and shared, and those in need are served.

As Spirit of Hope parish continues to discern how to best carry out the mission of the Church through parish life and structure, it has been determined that it is impossible to continue to support the church of Saint John. Your pastor, Father Ballard, has done remarkable work of bringing multiple parishes together. With the help of the parish trustees and the pastoral and finance councils, he has come to the conclusion that due to serious structural issues and limited financial resources, the church of Saint John needs to be relegated to profane but not sordid use (close) in order to be alienated (sold) along with its property.

Based on the factual evidence that was provided to me, I have decided to grant the request of Father Ballard. Accordingly, the Decree of Relegation is attached. I am grateful to him and to all of you for navigating these challenging times with faith and trust in the Lord. I am confident that this decision will continue to provide stable pastoral care as you continue to carry out the mission of the Church.

Churches are a significant part of our history and tradition and the loss of a church is certainly sad and something to be mourned. At the same time, it is a reminder that the Church is not merely 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!

May the Lord bless you and fill you with the grace you need to be his witnesses moving forward together as Pilgrims of Hope.

Be assured of my continued prayers for all of you.

In the Name of Jesus,

Most Reverend Douglas J. Lucia  
Bishop of Syracuse

*Faith • Hope • Charity*