People of Life
An Interview with Bishop Douglas J. Lucia

1. **What can Catholics do to better support moms and their children in need?**

   When *Roe vs. Wade* was overturned, the Bishops of NYS came out with a statement called, *Towards a Pro-Life Future in the Empire State*. One of the things it sought to address was this whole idea of helping mothers. The Church often is accused of only caring about the baby, and that is just not the case. The Church, at the national level, started a movement called *Walking With Moms in Need*. That has taken on different forms in different places. When I was a priest in the Diocese of Ogdensburg, one of the things I did in my parish was to establish a group called *Gabriel Project*. The Gabriel Project was all about having a place where pregnant mothers in need could come and find help. What I discovered is that these helpers were called the “angels.” And they certainly were angels in the sense of how the women and men in my parish would reach out to help couples in need and single mothers in need. Not just about providing them with material things– which they did do– but even helping them get to doctors appointments and things like that. So firsthand I’ve seen how we do this and how the church does even more today. The church provides support in other ways as well. One of them is a document called *Radical Solidarity*. It’s a Pro-Life, Pro-Woman, Legislative Agenda that the New York State Catholic Conference helps us with. Our diocese also provides handouts of the different things that we can do. We can support Birthright, New Hope, or Joseph’s House as well as many other pregnancy care centers across the diocese by hosting baby showers or bottle drives. I think that’s where we have recognized that the Church can’t just say “no to abortion” but we need to also help those who are facing difficult decisions in their lives. And part of the thing with abortion is helping people see that there is not a need to go that route.

2. **What can we do to help more people be aware of the value and dignity of every human life?**

   That is a challenge these days. The challenge is that we live in a world– and I’ve had this discussion with other religious leaders, and discovered we share the same concern– where the world is engaging in a secularism that leaves God out of the picture. And the problem is when we leave God out of the picture, then we start forgetting our origin– that we come from God, that we go to God– instead, we make ourselves into God. In the 70s it was the “God is dead movement.” But the idea now, for many people, is that they make themselves into God. And the trouble in doing that, is all of a sudden the values connected with God are lost. The respect for world religions, for God’s creation, it all gets lost. And for me, one of the most recent troubling decisions out of Albany is approving the process of “human composting.” We have a total disregard for human life, even at its very end. We forget our origins, and our destiny.

*(Continued on page four)*
‘Radical Solidarity’
A Pro-Life, Pro-Woman Legislative Agenda for New York

As New York continues to present abortion as the best and only choice for vulnerable women, we offer a different vision. True choice exists when women, mothers, children, and families are supported. In these times of abortion extremism, we stand in radical solidarity with moms and their children through the following pro-life agenda:

► Prenatal Care and Maternal Health
The United States has a shockingly high maternal mortality rate, and New York is no exception. The numbers are even higher for women of color. Reversing these unacceptable statistics must be a priority for New York State. Women must be supported with comprehensive prenatal care and a focus on maternal health both during and after pregnancy.

► Empire State Child Tax Credit
Instead of encouraging women to abort their babies, New York State should be making it easier to raise children through initiatives such as the Empire State Child Tax credit. Currently, the credit is available for parents of children ages 4-17. It is critical that the credit be expanded to start at birth. It should also be made more generous and fully refundable. Easing economic burdens is an important way to support children and families.

► Adoption Tax Credit
It is a noble and blessed gift for a woman to carry a baby to term, and society must do all that it can to support the choice of adoption. The process should be incentivized on both ends so that all parties are supported. Adoption tax credits are one way to do this and should be prioritized to help mothers and families make these decisions.

► Childcare Expansion
Parents should be able to work to support their families and know that their young children are cared for. Affordable childcare is a critical part of a true pro-life agenda and must be expanded in New York to make raising children less burdensome.

► Educational Options
To ensure children realize their fullest potential, parents need access to the schools and educational programs that best meet the needs of their children. New York should promote the greatest educational options for families by assisting families with the cost of tuition at religious, independent, and neighboring public schools; expanding access to all public and private Universal Pre-K settings statewide, regardless of income; and ensure that children have needed transportation services to the school their family chooses.

► Affordable Housing
Housing is a human right and should be available to all New Yorkers. We must provide a safety net for the vulnerable to ensure that no one, especially mothers and children, become homeless. The expansion of affordable housing is crucial to showing solidarity with moms and babies across the state.

► Domestic Violence Issues
Pregnancy increases a woman’s chances of becoming a victim of domestic violence. Through prevention and support, New York must aid victims and vulnerable women so that they and their children are safe and cared for.

► Nutrition
With inflation dramatically increasing food prices statewide, New York should help struggling families by improving and expanding state-level outreach and education efforts related to the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), and expanding the federal School Lunch Program to provide universal free school meals to all children statewide.

► Paid Parental Leave
New parents must have ample opportunity to bond with their children, be they foster, newborn, or adopted. Paid parental leave should be expanded and fully paid so that mothers and fathers are not forced to choose between their career and the well-being of their children.

To be truly pro-life is to care for people from life’s beginning to its natural end. Moms and babies deserve the full support of society not just to survive, but to thrive. These important initiatives are ways in which we can stand in solidarity with them and with all New York families.
Praying for and Advocating Life

2023 Mass and Holy Hour for Life: Bishop Douglas Lucia presided a Mass For Life followed by a Holy Hour at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception on January 14. Hundreds were in attendance to celebrate the sanctity of life and pray for legal protection of the unborn in New York State.

Syracuse March for Life: Following the Mass and Holy Hour, hundreds joined in the first March for Life in Syracuse in a Post-Roe America! After the event, marchers were provided Chick-Fil-A sandwiches, cookies, and bottled water provided by the Diocese of Syracuse.
Interview with Bishop Lucia (Continued From Page One)

3. **Why should Catholics oppose assisted suicide?**

Well first of all, the opposition goes again to the very fact that each life is a gift from God. I know there can be an argument sometimes that “this is compassionate. I don’t want to see my relatives suffer.” In those moments, what we’re forgetting is, God can take all of those moments in our lives and make them fruitful. I talk from personal experience because I remember when my great-grandmother was dying. She was a very devout lady. At one point I couldn’t understand why she was suffering so much. It just happened to be a Sunday where we read about how our suffering could be transformed, that God could use our suffering to help others. And suddenly, it clicked with me— because I saw family members who didn’t pray, and all of a sudden they were praying again— and I was thinking how even that moment of suffering was a moment of transformation. And so, for me, part of it is that we live in a world that wants to avoid suffering so much that we’ve forgotten, even when we look at the Cross, the redemptive value of suffering. That gives all our lives great meaning! Some people will consider that a very harsh answer, but for me it’s going back to the original idea that every life is a gift. Every life makes a difference, and we don’t have the right to take away that life, whether that life is in the womb, or whether that life is coming to its natural end.

4. **Why is assisted suicide an approach that lacks love for those who are suffering?**

First, it takes away the role of healing from the medical profession. All of a sudden, a doctor is not a healer. I’m thinking of the concentration camps during the time of World War II, and one of the doctors became known as the “Angel of Death.” But that’s not who doctors are. Doctors are supposed to, according to the Hippocratic Oath, give comfort and care to a patient. Another aspect that is very dangerous is, “what about depression?” Saint Ignatius of Loyola in his foundational principles talks about, “you never make a decision when you’re really high, and you never make a decision when you’re really low.” In this case then, again, some would say, “give people the choice.” But sometimes, when people are very depressed, they’re not capable of making a choice - especially a choice that is life or death, a choice that cannot be undone. At this time, the advocates are saying assisted suicide should be approved based on the criteria of a terminal illness. But the problem is— is there any coercion? Is the family making the ill person feel like a burden? What about those who are voiceless? I especially fear that those who care for the elderly will start thinking, “This person’s lived a good life. It’s okay, let them go.” But “let them go” means putting a drug in their IV or things like that. That’s not dignity. They talk about death with dignity. That’s not respecting the person at all. And I think what’s so dangerous about this— and I say this as a Bishop— is it leaves God totally out of the picture. There’s no acknowledgement of God. Life is a precious gift from God. From the moment of creation to the moment of natural death.
Advocacy and Education
From the NYS Catholic Conference

Dangers of Abortion Pills

Legislation proposed in New York would allow women to obtain abortion medication after no more than a video call. Governor Hochul and many New York State legislators support this bill, which would shield health care practitioners from legal action in other states and prevent medical malpractice insurers from taking action against providers of these services.

In episode 27 of Capitol Compass, we talk with Joe Zalot from the National Catholic Bioethics Center. We discuss the dangers of abortion pills and legislation proposed in NYS.

Listen at: nyscatholic.org/capitol-compass-podcast/ or on any podcast app.

Hope and Healing After Abortion

Hope After Abortion
Post-Abortion Healing

Day of Hope and Healing for Women, April 29, 2023
(based on Entering Canaan)

Confidentially register at 855-364-0076 or hopeandhealing@syrdio.org.
Strengthening Family Relationships

March 5th
Ending the Blame Game: It Feels Good

March 19th
Understanding Expectations
Can Transform Your Marriage

April 2nd
Re-defining the Power Struggle:
Getting on the Same Team

April 16th
Coping with Control Issues:
It Doesn't Have to Be This Way

April 30th
Listening Beyond the Words:
The Miracle Skill

May 7th
Appreciating Personality Differences:
Yes, Appreciating!

May 21st
Recognizing Childhood Baggage
Saves Misunderstanding

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Contact Stephanie Stewart for more information or to join the meetings at:
sstewart@syrdio.org or 315-472-6754 Ext. 5.

The Third Option is a group program designed to build marriage skills.

Work on your marriage from the comfort of your own home!

March 2023 - May 2023 Online Meetings
SUNDAYS FROM 7:00-9:00 PM

Spring Day of Renewal for Separated and Divorced

Saturday, April 29, 2023
8:00 am - 4:00 pm

Christ the King Retreat Center
500 Brookford Rd., Syracuse, NY 13224

Includes continental breakfast, lunch, and all activities.

Tuition sponsorship is available.

All Are Welcome!

CONTACT:
DEACON DEAN BRAINARD
(315) 472-6754 OR
DBRAINARD@SYRDIO.ORG

The HOPE Appeal

ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIocese of Syracuse
**DIOCESAN EVENTS**

- **DAY OF HOPE AND HEALING FOR WOMEN, April 29, 2023:** Have you felt sad, ashamed, or not forgiven due to an abortion? Experience God’s mercy and peace at a Day of Hope and Healing. For more information, call Project Rachel Ministry at (855) 364-0076 or email: hopeandhealing@syrdio.org. All calls and emails are confidential.

- **2023 IGNITE CATHOLIC MEN’S CONFERENCE, Saturday, March 25, 2023,** SRC Event Center: Guest speakers are Timothy Cardinal Dolan, Gus Lloyd, and Michael McGlinn. Open to men ages 16-96. We are expecting a close to sellout crowd based on the slated speakers. Registration is open! For more information, visit ignitecatholicmen.org.

- **THE THIRD OPTION MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT MEETINGS:** Meetings are held online from 7:00pm to 9:00pm. Come build your marriage in the comfort of your own home. Upcoming topics and dates are: Mar. 5 -- “Ending the Blame Game: It Feels Good”; Mar. 19 -- “Understanding Expectations Can Transform Your Marriage”; Apr. 2 -- “Re-defining the Power Struggle: Getting on the Same Team”; Apr. 16 -- “Coping with Control Issues: It Doesn’t Have to Be The Way”; Apr. 30 -- “Listening Beyond the Words: The Miracle Skill”; May 7 -- “Appreciating Personality Differences: Yes, Appreciating!”; May 21 -- “Recognizing Childhood Baggage Saves Misunderstanding”. For more information or to participate, contact Stephanie at sstewart@syrdio.org or 315-472-6754 Ext. 5.

- **SPRING DAY OF RENEWAL FOR THOSE WHO ENDURE SEPARATION AND DIVORCE, April 29, 2023:** See ad on page six.

- **BRANCH OUT AND GROW, Support Group Meetings for those affected by separation and divorce.** Online zoom meetings every 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month, 7:00-8:00 p.m. Meeting topics: Mar 1 -- Loneliness; Mar. 15 -- Fears & Anxiety; Apr. 12 -- (No Meeting 4/5) Family & Friends; Apr. 19 -- Financial & Legal Issues; May 3 -- Conflict; May 17 -- Forgiveness. If you are interested in joining the meetings, learning more, or talking one-on-one, contact Deacon Dean Brainard at dbrainard@syrdio.org, or 315-472-6754 Ext. 4.

- **RETROUVAILLE PROGRAM:** If your marriage has become troubled or stressed, unloving, or uncaring; if your relationship has grown cold and distant; if you are thinking of separation or divorce, or if you are already separated or divorced but want to try again, then the Retrouvaille Program can help you. For more information call: 1-800-470-2230 or visit: http://www.HelpOurMarriage.com.

- **SPRING DAY OF RENEWAL FOR SEPARATED AND DIVORCED RETREAT:** See ad on page six.

- **40 DAYS FOR LIFE, SYRACUSE:** February 22- April 2, 2023, Planned Parenthood, 1120 E. Genesee St., Syracuse: Pray peacefully during a 40-day vigil in the public right-of-way outside of Planned Parenthood and help spread the word about this important outreach. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Jeanie Owens (315) 956-7772 or Shannon Guy (315) 664-5067 or visit 40daysforlife.com/Syracuse or email: syracuse40daysforlife@gmail.com.

- **THE THIRD OPTION MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT MEETINGS, The Good News Center, 10475 Cosby Manor Rd, Utica:** Meetings are held via Zoom from 6:30pm to 8:30pm. Learn from the experience of others on how to improve your relationship and find the joy in living a happier, healthier life together! Upcoming dates are Mar. 5, Mar. 19, Apr. 2, Apr. 16, Apr. 30, May 21, and June 4. Contact Michele Jones at (315) 735-6210 for more information.

- **40 DAYS FOR LIFE, ITHACA:** February 22- April 2, 2023, near Planned Parenthood, 620 W. Seneca St., Ithaca: For more information, contact Becky Fluger, (607) 423-7015 or email: lookinguptohim@yahoo.com.

**UPCOMING FAMILY/PRO-LIFE HAPPENINGS**

- **RETROUVAILLE PROGRAM:** If your marriage has become troubled or stressed, unloving, or uncaring; if your relationship has grown cold and distant; if you are thinking of separation or divorce, or if you are already separated or divorced but want to try again, then the Retrouvaille Program can help you. For more information call: 1-800-470-2230 or visit: http://www.HelpOurMarriage.com.

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Lent As a Family

The Daily Examen was developed by St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491 – 1556). The Examen is a spiritual self-examination and is different from The Examination of Conscience. We examine our own feelings, thoughts, words, and actions in each act of the day, asking: “Where was God in this moment? How did I respond?” Most lay people pray it once a day, usually in the evening. Allow about fifteen minutes to pray it with your family.

How to pray The Daily Examen:

1. Pray for Enlightenment.
   Example: “Let’s pray about our day. God, you have been with us all day long, since the time we woke up until now; help us to remember our day, so we can bring it to you.”

2. Give Thanks.
   Prompts: What was beautiful today? What made you happy? When were you amazed? Then say: Let’s quietly thank God for the many gifts, large and small, that we’ve received from him today.

3. Examine Your Thoughts, Words, and Actions.
   Prompts: How did you treat others? How did you respond to others? Were you aware of God’s presence? If so, how?

   Example: “If you really struggled or had a tough experience anytime today, talk to God about that now.”

5. Resolve to Live More Fully in Christ Tomorrow.
   Example: “How do you think you might respond to God’s presence more lovingly tomorrow? Go ahead and tell God about your plan and ask for the help of the Holy Spirit.

   Example: Holy Spirit, help us to be more aware of your presence in the everyday moments of our life tomorrow. Give us the grace to be more loving, and draw us ever closer to your heart. Amen.

Credit: “How to Pray the Daily Examen Worksheet” from Catholic HOM with adaptations from the Family/Respect Life Office.