

Bishop Cunningham's letter to the people of the Diocese of Syracuse

Featured in the Catholic Sun, February 14, 2019

<https://thecatholicsun.com/bishop-cunninghams-letter-to-the-people-of-the-diocese-of-syracuse/>

February 11, 2019: *Memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

During the past weeks, I have received numerous letters from many of you expressing your grief, anger and frustration over the abortion policy passed by our state legislature and signed into law by Governor Cuomo. I share your sorrow and fury.

The legislation is horrific and violates the dignity of every person created in the image and likeness of God. The legislation insists on the right to an abortion up to the moment of birth; drops all charges against an abortionist who allows an aborted baby to die; mandates that a physician need not perform the abortion; and could be used to suppress the conscience rights of healthcare professionals not to assist in the grisly procedure. In an OP Ed piece in the Wall Street Journal Cardinal Dolan captured the magnitude of the recent legislation: "It seems that abortion's supporters no longer hope it will be safe, legal and rare. Rather, it is celebrated, unregulated and frequent."

As your bishop my greatest concern is the salvation of those entrusted to my pastoral care. In the striking account in St. Matthew's Gospel of the final judgement, Jesus tells us that our eternal destiny depends on how we treat one another. No one should doubt that the vulnerable, innocent child in the mother's womb is our brother and sister. Our treatment of the unborn impacts our eternal destiny.

I believe it is essential to our salvation that we remain "in Christ" as faithful disciples and in full communion with His Church. Communion with Christ and His Church involves regular participation in Mass and the sacraments, especially Reconciliation and Eucharist; forming our consciences according to the moral tenets of our faith; keeping the two great commandments of love of God and neighbor; knowing, living and sharing our faith and welcoming the repentant sinner into the community.

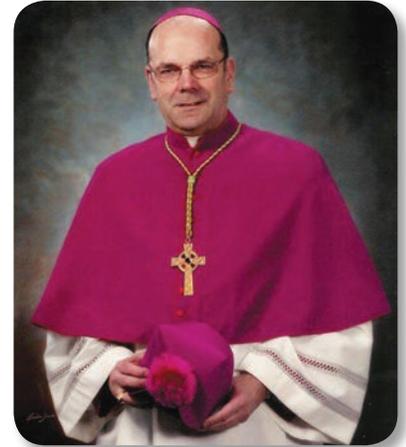
Pope Francis reminds us often that we are called to extend Christ's love and mercy to all, especially those on the fringes, those at a distance from us and even those distant from the Church. The Church is the instrument of salvation for all of us, the vehicle of God's mercy. Along with the outcry against the new state legislation extending abortion, I have heard also the cry for retaliation.

Let me be clear. The act of abortion is deplorable to all who support the sanctity and dignity of life. However, to alienate those who publicly disregard the sanctity of life is contrary to a Church that should always be open to receive the repentant sinner. Let me remind you, that no formal statement of excommunication is needed to separate one from the Church. Those involved in the passage of the recent legislation have in fact separated themselves from communion with Christ and His Church – whether they admit this or not. I pray that they will utilize the sacrament of Reconciliation and once again enjoy the merciful embrace of Christ and His Church.

In conclusion, I wish to address those who have been involved in an abortion. I am thinking particularly of the mothers and fathers who turned to abortion rather than allowing a child to come to full term. No sin removes us from the possibility of God's forgiveness. As Pope Francis reminds us, "God never tires of forgiving us." If you have not already done so, "come home" to the Church and the loving embrace of its community. If you are struggling with the after-effects of an abortion please know that we have diocesan resources available to assist you.

We renew our pledge to offer the resources and services of our charitable agencies and health services to any woman experiencing an unplanned pregnancy, to support her in bearing her infant, raising her family or placing her child for adoption. There are life-affirming choices available, and we aim to make them more widely known and accessible.

Please join me in prayer for a renewed appreciation for the sanctity of human life.



BISHOP ROBERT J. CUNNINGHAM

Devotedly yours in Christ,

+ Robert J. Cunningham

Most Reverend Robert J. Cunningham
Bishop of Syracuse

How Catholics Can Help Build A Culture of Life

Featured in the Catholic Sun, February 14, 2019 By Katherine Long

Following the Jan. 22 passage of the Reproductive Health Act, the diocesan Office of Family/Respect Life Ministry heard from scores of concerned people wanting to know what they could do, according to director Lisa Hall.

Hall's answer: "We need to redouble our efforts." Here, Hall offers suggestions on how Catholics can take action to help build a culture of life.

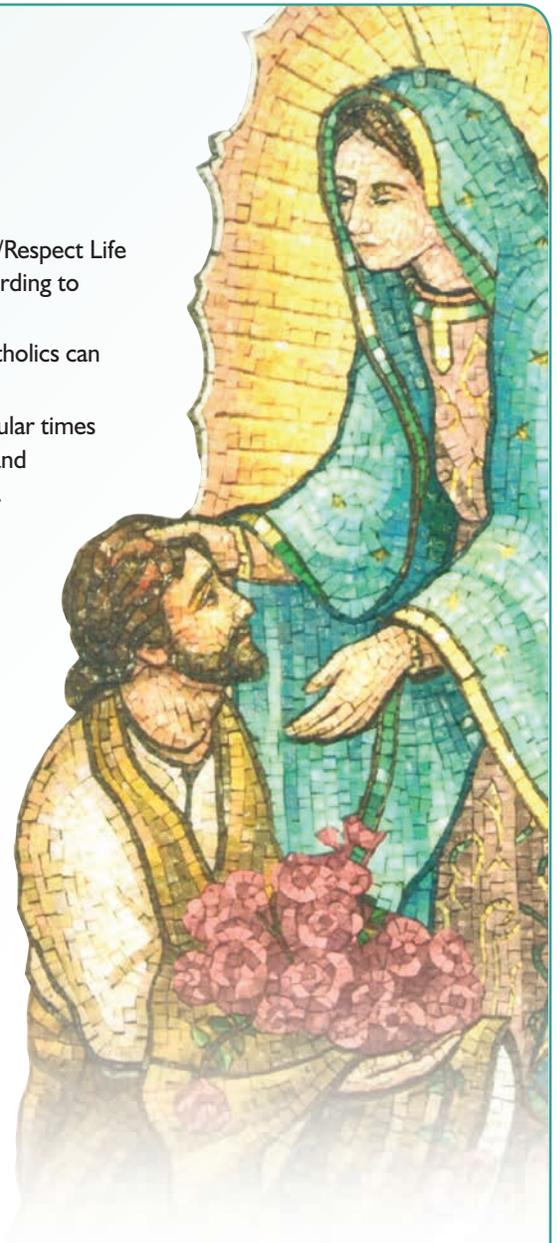
- **Pray.** "We need prayers at every Mass for the unborn and their parents, not just at particular times during the year," Hall said. She also emphasized parishes organizing rosaries, holy hours, and adoration with a focus on life. Prayers, intercessions, and more can be found at usccb.org.
- **Support pregnancy care centers and agencies that provide life-affirming choices.** At a pregnancy care center "a woman will be met, first and foremost, with love, respect, and acceptance," Hall said. "These centers are places where you can go to find answers and help."

She also cited organizations like Joseph's House in Syracuse, which provides a home for mothers facing unplanned pregnancies, and Catholic Charities agencies, which offer programs for expecting parents and material support for those in need. "Our goal as Catholics really ought to be that every mother should have the support she needs to choose life," she said.

Hall's office has produced a flyer listing the contact information for numerous care centers, organizations, and agencies throughout the diocese; download it at <https://syracusediocese.org/offices/familyrespect-life/>. "Those sheets need to be visible in every parish," Hall said, adding, "And we need to know where to advise people to go for real help."

- **Provide compassionate help for those who regret their involvement with abortion.** "We must also redouble our efforts to provide healing for those involved with abortion as well as encourage those who are out of communion with the Church to come back through reconciliation," Hall noted. "Those are things the Church is designed for. We are about the saving of souls and the glory of God. It's up to us to accompany the woman facing the unexpected pregnancy and to provide a place and space to reconcile for those who have sinned."
- Hall's office offers Project Rachel Ministry, the Church's program for post abortion-healing, and offers additional resources as well. Visit <https://syracusediocese.org/offices/familyrespect-life/> to learn more.
- **Educate.** Teaching all Catholics, young and old, about the sanctity of every life is essential, Hall noted. For the past few years, the Family/Respect Life Office and the Catholic Schools Office have partnered to bring pro-life speakers to every high school religion class during October, Respect Life Month, Hall explained. She urged every Faith Formation program to incorporate lessons on life and families to talk about life issues – "at the dinner table, in the car" – as well. Find tools and resources at <https://syracusediocese.org/offices/familyrespect-life/>.
 - **Advocate.** "Every Roman Catholic in our diocese should be connected to the New York State Catholic Conference website," Hall said. The Conference represents the state's bishops in matters of public policy and works to "apply the principles of Catholic social teaching to critical issues of the day and encourage citizen involvement in the legislative process," according to the organization's website, nyscatholic.org. Hall also urged Catholics to join the Conference's Catholic Action Network, which provides updates on public policy issues and allows members to contact legislators about those issues.
 - **Speak Up.** Perhaps the most important thing Catholics can do to build a culture of life is to simply speak up, Hall noted. "We can't be afraid. We cannot be afraid. We have to be willing to speak up for life, the gift and beauty of life, in every circumstance - with our neighbors, our friends, our families."

"The changing of minds and hearts happens one person at a time through conversation and through loving acts – acts where we support one another," Hall said.



To see how every legislator voted on the "Reproductive Health Act", and to send a message to your elected official, visit the New York State Catholic Conference's website: <https://www.nyscatholic.org/2019/01/legislative-votes-on-abortion-expansion/>
SIGN THE PETITION TO REPEAL THE ABORTION LAW: <https://www.nyscatholic.org/nys-catholic-conference-action-center/>

Lenten Prayer For Couples and Families

Lent is quickly approaching! Have you thought about how you and your family can draw closer to Christ through prayer this Lent?

The Stations of the Cross are always a great way to enter into the Passion and Death of our Lord, and now there are versions that have reflections specifically written for marriage and families. Reflect on the Way of the Cross in the context of marriage and family life using the World Wide Marriage Encounter (WWME) *Stations of the Cross for Couples* or the *For Your Marriage Stations of the Cross for Marriages and Families* by searching “stations of the cross for couples” on Google. You could even have your family write their own stations by assigning each person set stations to reflect on.

Within your Lenten sacrifices, consider offering one sacrifice that would enhance your marriage/family life, such as one of the following Lenten Resolutions from Pope Francis: <https://bit.ly/ITSODq9>.

1. Be courteous to your spouse.
2. Say “thank you” to your spouse.
3. Ask forgiveness from your spouse.
4. Pray together with your spouse and family.
5. Visit the elderly, especially your grandparents.
6. Share the faith with others



You could also ask your church to host a Stations of the Cross event for couples or families.

World Marriage Day

World Marriage Day was celebrated on February 10, 2019 at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Syracuse. Bishop Robert J. Cunningham celebrated Mass and invited couples to renew their commitment to Holy Matrimony. Special recognition was given to couples who celebrated 25, 50 and 50+ years of marriage.

Around 300 people; 51 couples with their families attended the joyful event. A reception followed the Mass. Read more in the Syracuse Catholic Sun newspaper, February 14th issue, at <https://thecatholicsun.com/couples-celebrated-at-annual-world-marriage-day-mass/>.



Joseph and Elizabeth McCarthy received a certificate from Bishop Cunningham. The couple celebrated 66 years of marriage on Valentine's Day, Feb. 14. THE CATHOLIC SUN PHOTO | CHUCK WAINRIGHT

DIOCESAN EVENTS

DAY OF HOPE & HEALING FOR WOMEN: April 27, 2019: Do you have unresolved feelings about involvement with an abortion? Have you felt guilty, sad, ashamed or not forgiven? Experience God's mercy and peace at a Day of Hope and Healing for women. The location and contacts are confidential due to the personal nature of this experience. For more information, call Project Rachel Ministry at (855) 364-0076 or email: hopeandhealing@syrдио.org. All calls and emails are confidential.

WINTER FAMILY FUN DAY AT GREEK PEAK: 2177 Clute Rd., Cortland, March 16, 2019, 12:00 - 4:00 p.m. Sponsored by the Syracuse Diocese NFP Ministry. Join other families for lots of winter fun - INSIDE - at Greek Peak's Cascades Indoor Waterpark! This event is one you won't want to miss - for \$15 per person, you get an entire day of access to the waterpark at less than half the normal rate AND lunch! Tickets are required, so go to <https://nfpwinterfun.eventbrite.com> for more information and to register! Children under 2 years old are free. Questions? Contact us at nfp@syrдио.org or (315) 472-6754.

IGNITE 2019 CATHOLIC MEN'S CONFERENCE: SRC Arena, Onondaga Community College, 4585 W. Seneca Turnpike, Syracuse, March 30, 2019, 9:00 a.m. - 4:45 p.m.: Guest speakers include Eric Mahl, Chris Padgett and John Bergsma, Ph.D. Cost is \$65 (advanced registration) and \$70 at the door. Cost includes conference registration, continental breakfast and lunch. For more information visit www.ignitecatholicmen.org.

THIRD OPTION MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT MEETINGS: Holy Cross Church, 4112 E. Genesee St., Dewitt, 7:00 p.m.: The following topics are addressed: Mar. 24 - "Speaking the Truth in Love: Seven Communication Techniques"; Apr. 7 - "Conflict Resolution: Solving Disagreements"; April 28 - "Ending the Hurt Spiral and Start Loving Again"; May 5 - "Practicing Forgiveness: The Way We Start Over"; May 19 - "Rebuilding Trust: It Can Be Done"; and June 2 - "Two Great Secrets of Happily Married Couples". No reservations are necessary. For more information, email Stephanie at stewart@syrдио.org or call (315) 472-6728. There is no charge; a free will offering is accepted.

HORIZON OF HOPE, ANNUAL DAY OF RENEWAL FOR SEPARATED AND DIVORCED, Christ the King Retreat Center, 500 Brookford Rd, Syracuse, June 22, 2019, 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. There will be an uplifting keynote, empowering workshops, and small group sharing that will equip you to move forward. Workshops include: Helping Our Children, Discerning A Path Forward, Money Matters, What's Happening to Me? You will have an opportunity to talk 1:1 with a priest and attend a healing liturgy. For more information or to register, please see the enclosed newsletter flyer or contact Deacon Dean Brainard, (315) 472-6754 or email dbrainard@syrдио.org.

UPCOMING PRO-LIFE HAPPENINGS

WESTERN REGION:

SYR SIDEWALK ADVOCATES FOR LIFE, Basic Sidewalk Training, Holy Family Church, Pastoral Center, 127 Chapel Dr., Syracuse, March 7, 2019, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Would you like to learn how to help women in unplanned, crisis pregnancies choose life at the abortion center? Sidewalk Advocates for Life offers a peaceful, prayerful, law-abiding sidewalk advocacy method that seeks to reach that woman's heart and fill her needs so she can confidently choose life! Please contact Jeanie at (315) 956-7772 or syracuse40daysforlife@gmail.com to register. More information at www.sidewalkadvocates.org.

40 DAYS FOR LIFE, SYRACUSE: March 6-April 14, 2019, Planned Parenthood, 1120 E. Genesee St., Syracuse. You're invited to stand and pray peacefully during a 40-day vigil in the public right-of-way outside of the Planned Parenthood in Syracuse and to help spread the word about this important community outreach. For more information or to volunteer to help, please contact Jeanie Owens (315) 956-7772 or Shannon Guy (315) 664-5067, or visit 40daysforlife.com/Syracuse or email: syracuse40daysforlife@gmail.com.

FRIENDS FOR LIFE INC. ANNUAL LUNCHEON: April 6, 2019, Barbagallo's Restaurant, 6344 E. Molloy Rd., East Syracuse. Lunch will be served at noon. Guest speaker is Barbara Reudink. For more information contact Joan Brown (315) 488-4146 or Betty Morrell (315) 488-1301.

SYRACUSE RIGHT TO LIFE ORATORY CONTESTS, Holiday Inn, 441 Electronics Parkway, Liverpool, April 28, 2019, Noon-3:00 p.m. There will be a contest for 11th and 12th grade students and a separate contest for 9th and 10th grade students. The youth are expected to present an original 5-7 minutes pro-life speech on abortion, infanticide, euthanasia or stem cell research. \$500 in local prizes. For more information, contact Holly Delavan (315) 492-3956, Lorraine Kiehl (315) 451-1788, or Syracuse Right to Life Assoc. (315) 546-BABY (2229).

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: Saturdays, 10:30 a.m. Pray in the public right-of-way outside of Planned Parenthood, 1120 E. Genesee St., Syracuse, to end abortion.

JOSEPH'S HOUSE 5TH ANNUAL "BIRDIES FOR BABIES" GOLF TOURNAMENT: Skaneateles Country Club, 3344 W. Lake St., Skaneateles, June 10, 2019: The proceeds of the tournament will benefit Joseph's House, a loving home for homeless pregnant women. Sponsorships and registration information are available at <https://www.jhfw.org/birdies-for-babies>.

EASTERN REGION:

THIRD OPTION MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT MEETINGS: The Good News Center, 10475 Cosby Manor Rd., Utica, 6:30 p.m.:

The following topics are addressed: Mar. 17 – "Rebuilding Trust"; Mar. 31 – "Building a Climate of Respect"; Apr. 14 – "Ending the Blame Game"; Apr. 28 – "Expectations"; May 19 – "Redefining the Power Struggle"; and June 2 – "Coping with Control Issues". The meetings are free and open to the public. For more information, call (315) 735-6210 or info@thegoodnewscenter.org.

SOUTHERN REGION:

40 DAYS FOR LIFE ITHACA, Planned Parenthood, 620 West Seneca St., Ithaca, March 6- April 14, 2019: A peaceful and prayerful vigil will be held at the "Street Chapel" across from Planned Parenthood, Ithaca. For more information visit, www.40daysforlife.com/Ithaca or contact Mary Anne Tissot (315) 246-7479 or email sweetwind53@yahoo.com.

40 DAYS FOR LIFE BINGHAMTON/VESTAL, March 6-April 14, 2019, 149 Vestal Parkway West, Vestal: Pray to end abortion at the public right-of-way near the Southern Tier Women's Services. For more information or to sign up for vigil hours between 8 a.m. - 8 p.m., contact Nancy Krembs, (607) 206-1011, email: nkrembs@yahoo.com or visit <https://40daysforlife.com/local-campaigns/binghamton/>.

The *Life Line*

Office of Family/Respect Life Ministry

240 E. Onondaga St., Syracuse, NY 13202 • (315) 472-6754

www.syrdio.org • email: familyrespectlife@syrdio.org

Like us on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/familyrespectlifesyrcuse/?fref=ts>

Lisa Hall, Director, (315) 470-1418, email: llhall@syrdio.org

Morgan Durfee, Program/NFP Coordinator,
(315) 472-6754, email: mdurfee@syrdio.org

Sharon Flanagan, Chastity/Theology of the Body Educator,
(315) 470-1417, email: sflanagan@syrdio.org

Deacon Dean Brainard, Separated & Divorced Ministry,
(315) 472-6754, email: dbrainard@syrdio.org

Sue & Ron Kielar, Eastern Region Marriage Prep Coordinators, (315) 737-7529, email: kielars@syrdio.org

Debra Oliva, Project Rachel Program Coordinator,
(315) 472-6754, email: doliva@syrdio.org

Bethanie Ryan, Social Media Programmer,
(315) 751-8976, email: bryan@syrdio.org

Stephanie Stewart, Third Option Marriage Program,
(315) 472-6754, email: sstewart@syrdio.org

Nina Ranieri, Eastern Region NFP Program Coordinator,
(315) 472-6754, email: nranieri@syrdio.org

Maria Montreuil, Southern Region NFP Program Coordinator, (315) 472-6754, email: mmontreuil@syrdio.org

Pregnant?

**NEED SOMEONE
TO TALK TO?
CALL OR VISIT:**

SYRACUSE AREA:

Birthright, 346 North Midler Ave. #46, Syracuse, NY 13206
(315) 479-5807 or (800) 550-4900, <https://birthright.org/syracuse>

New Hope Family Services, 3519 James Street, Syracuse, NY 13206
(315) 437-8300 or (800) 272-3171, www.newhopefamilyservices.com

Care Net Pregnancy Center of Central New York, 4268 Wetzel Rd., Liverpool, NY 13090
(315) 715-0500, <https://carenetcares.com/contact-us/liverpool>

Catholic Charities of Onondaga County Expectant Parent Services, (315) 362-7647

OSWEGO/FULTON/CAMDEN AREA:

New Life Crisis Pregnancy Center, 3349 Main St., Mexico, NY 13114
(315) 963-2273, (800) 712-4357, <https://nlpregnancy.org>

Pregnancy Care Center, 157 Liberty St., Oswego, NY 13126, (315) 343-4866

Care Net Pregnancy Center of Central New York, 101 Main St., Camden, NY 13316
(315) 245-2364, <https://carenetcares.com/contact-us/camden>

UTICA/ONEIDA/ROME/MORRISVILLE/NEW HARTFORD AREA:

Care Net Pregnancy Centers of Central New York, 1418 Genesee St, Utica, NY 13502, (315) 738-9435;
126 N. Main St., Oneida, NY 13421, (315) 366-9902; 312 N. James St., Rome, NY 13440, (315) 337-0242;
89 E. Main St. Morrisville, NY 13408, (315) 684-3003;

140 Clinton Rd., New Hartford, NY 13413, (315) 733-5404, <https://carenetcares.com>

Evelyn's House (for young mothers and babies), 10 Barton Ave., Utica, NY 13502
(315) 733-0236, www.fnccny.org

Catholic Charities "Pregnancy & Parenting Support", 1408 Genesee St., Utica, NY 13502,
(315) 724-2158, www.catholiccharitiesom.org

BINGHAMTON/CORTLAND AREA:

Life Choices/Binghamton Location, 93 Oak St., Binghamton, NY 13905
(607) 205-8506, email: info@lifechoicescenter.org, website: <https://lifechoicescenter.org/>

Birthright, 435 Main St., #126, Johnson City, NY, 13790
(607) 798-7661, (800) 550-4900, <https://birthright.org/binghamton>

Mom's House, 770 Harry L Dr., Johnson City, NY 13790
(607) 644-9972, <http://www.momshouseny.org/>

Pregnancy Resource Center, 220 Front St., Vestal, NY 13850, (607) 444-1388, <http://www.prcv.org>

Cortland Pregnancy Center, 4 Church St., Cortland, NY 13045, (607) 753-3909

Catholic Charities of Broome County, 232 Main St., Binghamton, NY 13905
(607) 729-9166, www.catholiccharitiesbc.org

ALL AREAS:

Joseph's House for Women, Hotline (315) 288-0319, Office (315) 701-4981, <https://www.jhfw.org>

THIRD OPTION

Marriage Program



The Third Option is an ongoing group program to build better marriages. 2019 Marriage Enrichment meetings are in the following areas:

SYRACUSE AREA:

- March 24:** “Speaking the Truth in Love. Seven Communication Techniques”
- April 7:** “Conflict Resolution: Solving Disagreements”
- April 28:** “Ending the Hurt Spiral and Start Loving Again”
- May 5:** “Practicing Forgiveness: The Way We Start Over”
- May 19:** “Rebuilding Trust: It Can Be Done”
- June 2:** “Two Great Secrets of Happily Married Couples”

Meetings are 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

at Holy Cross Church, 4112 E. Genesee St., Dewitt, NY.

No reservations are necessary. For more information, email Stephanie at [sstewart@syrdio.org](mailto:ssewart@syrdio.org) or call (315) 472-6728.

There is no charge; a free will offering is accepted.

UTICA AREA:

- March 17:** “Rebuilding Trust”
- March 31:** “Building a Climate of Respect”
- April 14:** “Ending the Blame Game”
- April 28:** “Expectations”
- May 19:** “Redefining the Power Struggle”
- June 2:** “Coping with Control Issues”

Meetings are 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. at The Good News Center

10475 Cosby Manor Rd., Utica, NY 13502.

**For more information, call (315) 735-6210
or email: info@thegoodnewscenter.org.**



WINTER FAMILY FUN DAY



Saturday, March 16, 2019
12:00 - 4:00 p.m.

EVENT LOCATION: Cascades Indoor Waterpark at Greek Peak



COST: \$15 per person, which includes access to the waterpark and lunch!

Children under 2 years old are FREE

For more information and to register, go to <https://nfpwinterfun.eventbrite.com>



Questions? Contact us at nfp@syrdio.org or (315) 472-6754.

Hosted by the Syracuse Diocese NFP Ministry, Office of Family/Respect Life



For I know well the plans I have in mind for you, says the LORD...plans for your welfare and not your woe, plans to give you a future full of hope.
- Jeremiah 29-11

Horizons of Hope

Annual Day of Renewal for the Separated and Divorced

Saturday, June 22, 2019

8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Christ the King Retreat Center

500 Brookford Road Syracuse, NY 13224

- Uplifting and empowering Keynote delivered by Jim Krisher, Director of The Spiritual Renewal Center and Liturgy presided by Father John Rose.
- Workshops and small group sharing will equip you to move forward.
- Workshops include:
 - Helping Our Children
 - Money Matters
 - Discerning a Path Forward
 - What's Happening to Me?
 - and more
- Opportunity to talk one-on-one with a priest

Registration is \$45 which includes a delicious lunch, fellowship, keynote and the workshops of your choice. Scholarships are available to make the experience affordable for all.

For more information contact:

Deacon Dean Brainard | 315-472-6754 | dbrainard@syrdio.org

Learn more at <https://syracusediocese.org/offices/familyrespect-life/separated-divorced>

To register online visit: <https://horizonsofhope.eventbrite.com>