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**A STATEMENT FROM BISHOP DOUGLAS J. LUCIA
ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SYRACUSE**

The events of the past 24 hours in the City of Syracuse and across our nation are expressions of sorrow and frustration. Sadness at an unconscionable act that took the life of a young man in middle America despite the valiant attempt of other citizens to intervene. The scene now embedded in our consciousness cries out with the words of the Lord in Genesis 3:10 – “What have you done? Listen, your brother’s blood is crying out to me from the ground!” At its heart is a central teaching of God’s law of love that all life is sacred from conception to natural death; and that we are to love our neighbor as ourselves (cf. Lv. 19:18, Mt. 22:39, Mk.12:31, Lk. 10:27).

Herein lies also the frustration experienced as well: Why doesn’t life matter? Whether it is the life of the unborn child in the womb, the life of a brother or sister who may have a different skin color than us, the life of someone who is elderly or terminally ill, the life of a shopkeeper or public safety officer, the life of someone whose beliefs are different than ours, and the list could go on. Unfortunately, frustration can cause us to strike out at one another like Cain did to Abel. Such behavior is often accompanied by words like: “I don’t care.”

During this time of pandemic, it has been shown repeatedly that what best defeats COVID-19 is our conscientious adherence to practices that are considerate of our neighbors. The same could be said today of the malaise in our country when it comes to truly caring for one another. I grant you that I wonder how many wake-up calls it will take to get our society back on track when it comes to the precious gift that is human life.

Nonetheless, the time to act is now! As we celebrate the great feast of Pentecost, let us pray that the Lord’s law of love will not be something we have just memorized. Rather, may it be written on our hearts and in our daily actions. I ask that out of respect for one another no more property or businesses in this city and in Onondaga County be damaged, but instead we work peacefully together to support one another and put an end to injustice and racism.

Come, Holy Spirit! Enkindle within us the fire of God’s love! Amen.