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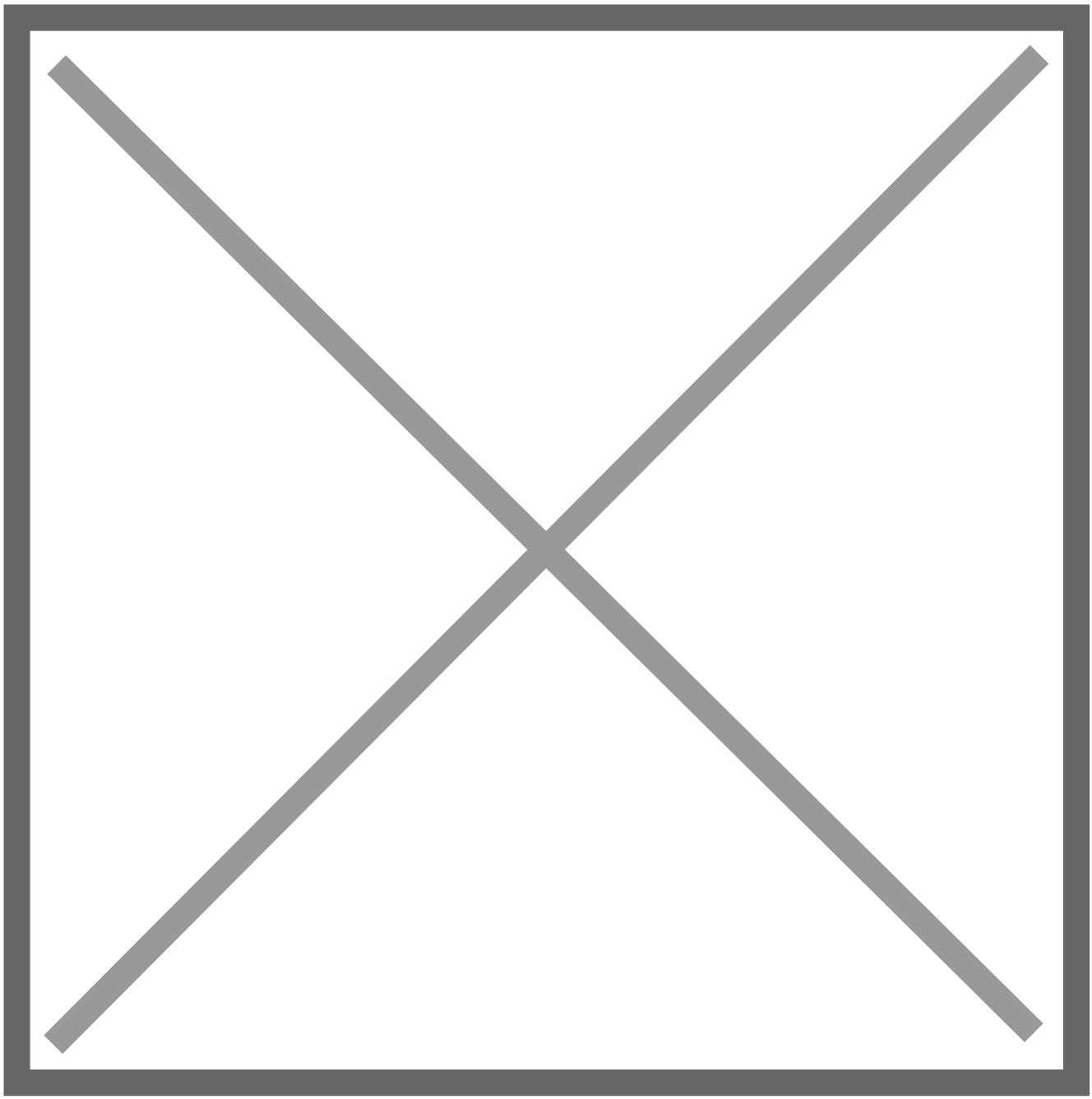

Bishop Douglas Lucia of Syracuse, N.Y., celebrates Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Syracuse May 9, 2025. The Diocese of Syracuse, N.Y., announced Feb. 25, 2026, it is emerging from Chapter 11 bankruptcy. (OSV News/Courtesy of the Catholic Sun)

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SYRACUSE, N.Y. — February 27, 2026
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The Diocese of Syracuse, New York, has formally closed out its long-running bankruptcy, funding a victims' trust with more than $176 million to settle claims.

The move concludes a "journey of reparation" begun in June 2020 to "provide compensation for the pain and mistreatment experienced by survivors/victims of sexual abuse at the hands of those entrusted with their care," wrote Syracuse Bishop Douglas Lucia in a Feb. 25 letter to diocesan faithful.

He noted that Chief Judge Wendy Kinsella of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of New York, had approved the final decree in the nearly six-year case that same day.

The bishop said the diocese had "conveyed its commitment" to the agreed-upon victim's trust fund, with $76.1 million provided by insurance and $100 million from what he called "our 'Catholic family'" — parishes ($45 million), the diocese itself ($50 million) through "a combination of investments and loans," and other diocesan entities ($5 million). The monies will be awarded by an independent arbiter, he said.

The diocese faced 411 unique claims from abuse survivors brought under two New York lookback laws after the Child Victims Act and the Adult Survivors Act took effect in New York state.

Together, the two acts allowed claims of abuse to be filed regardless of any prior statute of limitations. The CVA accepted filings through April 15, 2021, and the Adult Survivor Act through Jan. 17, 2023.

He noted the plan relies on a channeling injunction, a legal mechanism under U.S. bankruptcy code that funnels claims to a trust established to make payouts to both current and, in particular, future claimants.

With claims against the diocese, parishes and other Catholic entities resolved through the victims' trust, the channeling injunction ensures "a comprehensive and just response," providing "a unified path toward reparation rather than individual legal actions," said Lucia.

He added that the plan "formalizes our commitment to Safe Environment policies, ensuring our protection protocols remain rigorous and effective in preventing a repetition of the past."

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Lucia admitted that "we did not foresee how long this journey would take." He noted "the wait has been a significant burden for those who filed claims," as well as "the heaviness this has placed on the hearts of the faithful who have been scarred by this chapter in our local Church."

"Throughout this Chapter 11 process, I have met with survivors who courageously shared their stories and expressed the depth of their pain," said Lucia. "As your Bishop, words cannot adequately express my feelings and sorrow regarding such heinous behavior, but I again offer my most heartfelt apology to those who have suffered such harm and for any past neglect in addressing it."

He invited diocesan faithful, and "especially survivors of abuse and their families," to a special Mass on April 26, known as "Blue Sunday," a day of prayer for those affected by abuse, and part of the observance of National Child Abuse Prevention Month.

"Beyond doubt, my heart continues to break for the damage that abuse has inflicted on the Church and its members," he said. "To the survivors and their families, I express genuine sorrowfulness and a firm resolve to ensure that future generations

do not experience this scourge."

"The Catholic Church in the United States has made a 'Promise to Protect' and a 'Pledge to Heal,'" he said, referencing the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' norms on addressing clergy abuse. "As part of that Church, we must remain ever vigilant."