



## THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF PHOENIX

### TILMA

Pastoral Letter from the Most Reverend John P. Dolan  
October 7, 2024, Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

There is no love like that of a mother. A mother who cares tenderly, anticipates our needs, leads us along the way and is a safe place to land in all of the ups and downs of life. In the Diocese of Phoenix we have a magnificent patroness, Our Lady of Guadalupe, who is this mother to each one of us.

She is the same mother who, almost 500 years ago, appeared to Juan Diego on Tepeyac hill in modern day Mexico City, inviting him to boldly ask the local bishop that a church be built in her honor. The same mother whose image miraculously appeared on Juan Diego's tilma, which millions of pilgrims still visit every year, and who has become the greatest evangelizer in the Americas.

What moves my heart is *how* she appeared to Juan Diego, and in turn the whole Aztec people – she spoke their dialect, wore traditional garb and communicated through symbols that were personal to their culture. She also spoke to Juan Diego affectionally, calling him “Juanito, Juan Dieguito.”

In this same, tender way, she calls each one of us her sons and daughters, inviting us into the protective folds of her mantle. And just like Juan Diego's simple tilma, she desires to transform us into image bearers of Christ and great evangelizers of her motherly love.

Inspired by Our Lady of Guadalupe, I have developed a seven-year pastoral plan on evangelization, which will begin in January 2025 and lead up to December 9, 2031 – the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Our Lady's apparitions on Tepeyac hill.

Several considerations moved me to build out this plan: the new evangelization, particularly in the Americas, those on the peripheries, the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20), diocesan statistical analysis, tensions within our world and keeping up with Arizona growth, among others.

Each year has a theme; most are based on the apparitions of Our Lady of Guadalupe and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishop's National Pastoral Plan, “Missionary Disciples Going Forth with Joy”: 2025 Year of Hope, 2026 El Camino Real, 2027 Animated by Christ, 2028 That We May Be One, 2029 Renewed in Trust, 2030 The Encounter Moment and 2031 Go Forth in Joy.

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Each of the six years following the Jubilee Year I look forward to sharing a pastoral letter, delving into the theme and sharing practical ideas on evangelization for discernment and implementation on a personal, parish and diocesan level. We will also turn in a particular way to our Hispanic and Latino brothers and sisters, who are a great gift to the Church, and their example of deep devotion, rich traditions and familial love.

Year one of the pastoral plan will carry the theme “Year of Hope” in tandem with Pope Francis proclaiming 2025 the Jubilee Year of Hope. This is the perfect theme to begin our seven-year walk with Our Lady, who always leads us to Jesus, our Savior and our Hope.

Pope Francis has proposed “10 Hopes” which I invite you to consider in a particular way during this Year of Hope: Hope for peace over division, hope for enthusiasm for life and a readiness to share it, hope for the openness to life and responsible parenthood, hope for prisoners through restorative justice, hope for the sick and those dedicated to their care, hope for youth and young adults, hope for immigrants, migrants and refugees, hope for the elderly, hope for the poor and the hungry and hope for greater Christian unity.

This is a wonderful opportunity for an introspective moment. Before we set out to evangelize, we might ask ourselves, *“How am I being called to accompany others who are made in the image and likeness of God, especially the marginalized, who carry these crosses?”*

The Jubilee Year of Hope carries several opportunities for a plenary indulgence, beginning with visiting the holy doors in Rome. Additionally, I have decreed the following churches in the Diocese of Phoenix Jubilee sites during the Jubilee Year: Ss. Simon and Jude Cathedral (Phoenix), St. Mary's Basilica (downtown Phoenix), St. Anthony's (Gila River Indian Community), St. Mary's (Kingman), Sacred Heart (Prescott) and Chapel of the Holy Cross (Sedona).

A webpage is being created and will be available before the Advent season. It will be a one-stop shop for all information regarding the seven-year pastoral plan on evangelization, including access to the pastoral plan and information on the nature and conditions of indulgences and obtaining an indulgence during the Year of Hope. More to come in the following months at [catholicsun.org](http://catholicsun.org)

The title of this pastoral letter is inspired by an acronym of the word “TILMA,” which expresses my hope and personal invitation to each one of you: *Testifica, oh Iglesia, a la Luz del Misterio del Amor (Testify, o Church, to the Light of the Mystery of Love)*

I am delighted to journey with you through these seven years. As we go forward, let us find great hope in the words Our Lady spoke to Juan Diego, the same words she speaks to each one of us:

*“Am I not here, I who am your Mother? ... Are you not in the hollow of my mantle, in the crossing of my arms? Do you need something more? Let nothing else worry you or disturb you.”*

May God bless you and keep you,



+John P. Dolan  
Bishop of Phoenix

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