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Office of the President

Most Reverend Timothy M. Dolan
Archbishop of New York
President

December 9, 2010
Feast of St. Juan Diego

My Brother Bishops,

I am pleased to share with you the enclosed letter, entitled *The Protection of Marriage: A Shared Commitment*. This open letter is the fruit of discussion among various religious leaders. It testifies to the importance of the collaborative effort to promote and protect the unique and fundamental institution of marriage. I am particularly grateful to Archbishop Wilton Gregory and Archbishop Joseph Kurtz for their leadership over the last few months during this critical time of ecumenical and interreligious collaboration.

Brothers, I now have a special request.

In light of the current challenges facing marriage and religious liberty in the public square, this letter has high significance as a source of encouragement for our Catholic faithful as well as people of other communities. It is also a sign of the broad-based consensus, across religious boundaries, on the unique meaning of marriage. For that reason, I invite and encourage you to share this letter with your Vicars General, Communication Directors, and all your priests and parishes. I would ask for special consideration to be given toward insertion of the letter in parish bulletins. The letter is also available at www.usccb.org/defenseofmarriage/shared-commitment.

Thank you for your particular consideration to this request and for all that you do to strengthen and defend marriage and the family.

With prayers for a holy and blessed Advent season, I am

Faithfully in Christ,

Most Reverend Timothy M. Dolan
Archbishop of New York

President, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops