

I stand before you today with a **heart overflowing with gratitude to God** for His boundless mercy and love. Throughout my life, despite my shortcomings, He has blessed me in ways I could never have imagined or deserved. As He now calls me **to greater service**, I find myself leaning even more deeply on His love and mercy, knowing that whatever strength I have comes entirely from Him.

I am **profoundly honored that His Holiness Pope Leo XIV** has appointed me to serve in this sacred ministry. I thank him for his trust and confidence, conveyed to me so graciously through Cardinal Pierre. This appointment is not about me—it is **about God's people** and how we, as shepherds, can serve them more faithfully.

I wish to express my deepest gratitude to **Bishop John Dolan**. For the past three and a half years, as I have served our brother priests as Vicar for Clergy, Bishop John has been more than my bishop—he has been a mentor, a brother, and a true friend. His trust and confidence in me have sustained me through challenges and strengthened me in moments of uncertainty.

Now, to be appointed as auxiliary bishop to directly support his ministry fills me with joy, excitement, and a profound sense of responsibility. Anyone who knows Bishop John can **see the love, dedication, and joy** with which he shepherds this diocese—it's evident in everything he does. He is a **shepherd with clear vision**, one who has given us a roadmap for our future through the seven-year TILMA pastoral plan. To be invited to support his ministry, to be part of this exciting mission, is an honor I embrace wholeheartedly. I promise to give all my effort to be worthy of this trust.

I also wish to thank **Bishop Thomas Olmsted**, whose tremendous spiritual leadership shaped this diocese for so many years. When I first arrived in Phoenix, he was **a rock** I could lean on—a steady presence and wise spiritual father. I am equally grateful to **Bishop Eduardo Nevares** for his many years of faithful service among us. We continue to be blessed by his joy, his pastoral heart, and his love for God's people.

To **my brother priests: thank you!** Your support, your fraternity, and your trust in allowing me to serve you as Vicar for Clergy have been among **the greatest gifts of my priesthood**. Serving as Vicar for Clergy taught me something I will never forget: that loving you, my

brother priests, was never just about you and me. When I poured my heart into supporting your ministry, encouraging you in difficult moments, and walking alongside you, I saw how that love multiplied—flowing through **your hands** at the altar, through **your words** in the confessional, through **your presence** at hospital bedsides. To serve the shepherd is to serve the whole flock.

Now, I carry that same conviction into this new calling. In as much as I dedicate all my love and service to directly supporting Bishop John's ministry, I pray it will **bring even greater spiritual blessings** to the People of God here in Phoenix. This is my mission: **to serve the one who serves you all.**

I also want to thank the **dedicated staff at the Diocesan Pastoral Center**. Your love, support, and tireless work behind the scenes make so much of our diocesan ministry possible. Thank you for your commitment and for the joy you bring to our shared mission.

**Queridos hermanos y hermanas de la comunidad hispana,**

**Quiero dirigirme a ustedes en español para expresarles mi gratitud y mi compromiso de servirles con todo mi corazón. Estoy profundamente honrado de que el Santo Padre me haya nombrado Obispo Auxiliar de Phoenix.**

**Durante mis primeros años en Sudamérica, aprendí a amar la fe y la cultura hispana. Vi cómo las familias viven su fe con alegría y profunda devoción. Esa experiencia marcó mi vida sacerdotal para siempre. Ustedes enriquecen nuestra Iglesia con su fe, su cultura, y su amor por la Virgen María y por Cristo.**

**Les pido sus oraciones para que pueda ser fiel a esta misión. Prometo caminar con ustedes y estar presente en sus alegrías y en sus dificultades. Que el Señor nos bendiga a todos.**

**Kính thưa quý Ông Bà và Anh Chị Em thân mến,**

**Con xin được nói vài lời với cộng đoàn Công giáo Việt Nam thân yêu. Hôm nay, lòng con tràn đầy niềm vui khi Đức Thánh Cha Lêo XIV đã bổ nhiệm con làm Giám Mục Phụ Tá của Giáo phận Phoenix.**

**Trong những năm qua, mỗi khi con cử hành Thánh lễ, mỗi khi gặp gỡ quý vị, con luôn cảm nhận được tình yêu thương và lòng nhiệt thành của quý vị dành cho Chúa và Hội Thánh. Quý vị biết không? Chính qua gương sống đức tin của quý vị mà con học được cách yêu Chúa thật lòng, cách phục vụ không tính toán. Nếu hôm nay con có chút gì tốt đẹp để dâng hiến cho Hội Thánh, thì đó là nhờ quý vị đã kiên nhẫn dạy dỗ và nâng đỡ con.**

**Bây giờ, khi bước vào chương mới này, con xin hứa sẽ tiếp tục phục vụ quý vị với tất cả tấm lòng. Con kính xin quý Ông Bà Anh Chị Em luôn cầu nguyện cho con. Con cần ân sủng của Chúa và lời cầu nguyện của quý vị để chu toàn sứ vụ này một cách trung tín.**

**Xin Chúa chúc lành dồi dào cho quý Ông Bà Anh Chị Em.**

I also give thanks to God **for all His people**, especially those I have had the blessing of serving in the different parishes where I was assigned. As priests, we are called to be channels of God's grace and blessings to His people. But I have experienced something beautiful and humbling: God's people never fail to uplift their priests through prayers, support, and the inspiring example of their living faith. You have formed me as much as I have tried to serve you.

I ask you, please, to keep me in your prayers. This is a grave responsibility, and I will need God's grace—and your prayers—to carry it faithfully.

Finally, I thank God **for my family**. **My father**, now in God's eternal embrace, gave me the gift of faith lived with integrity and sacrifice. I feel his presence watching over me, and I trust in his intercession as I take on this new responsibility. And **my mother**—my dear 88-year-old

mother—continues to be a living witness of faithful devotion. Every single day at 3 o'clock, without fail, **she prays the Chaplet of Divine Mercy**. When I think of her quiet, steadfast prayer, I am reminded that the foundation of any ministry is not our own strength, but the prayers of those who love us and intercede for us before the throne of God.

I also thank God **for my eleven siblings**, whose love sustains me. Growing up as one of twelve children taught me the meaning of community, sacrifice, and shared joy. My brothers and sisters have been my first teachers in what it means to live in communion with others—and their support continues to strengthen me.

Together, they taught me the faith and formed me in love. Whatever good I can offer to the Church, I owe first to them and to the grace of God working through them. They showed me what it means to serve with joy, to give without counting the cost, and to trust in God's providence.

As I begin this new chapter, I do so with humility, with hope, and with a heart full of love for this local Church. The road ahead is both exciting and daunting. But I take confidence in knowing that **I do not walk it alone**. I walk it with Bishop John and Bishop Nevares, with my brother priests, with God's faithful people, with the prayers of my mother and the intercession of my father, with the love of my siblings, and most importantly, **with the Lord Himself** who calls and equips those He sends.

May God grant me the wisdom, the courage, and the love to serve you well.

Thank you, and may God bless you all.

**SEPARATE Q&A RESPONSE: "How did you receive the news?"**

Last Monday, I walked into my office planning to **tackle emails**—just another ordinary Monday morning, I thought. Wishful thinking!

I heard my phone vibrate, but I was trying to stay focused, so I ignored it. Then it vibrated again. When I finally looked, I saw two missed calls and a voicemail from area code 202. Washington, D.C. My heart missed a couple of beats. Cardinal Christophe Pierre had left a message asking me to call him back for a conversation.

Now, I want you to know—my hands were shaking. I was thinking, *"I'm pretty sure I didn't do anything wrong... but I still feel like I'm in trouble!"*

When I called him back, he asked how I was doing and whether I was alone. I told him I was alone in my office, and then I apologized, explaining that I normally don't pick up unknown numbers, which is why I'd missed his calls twice. He must have heard the nervousness in my voice, so he tried to put me at ease with a little laugh and said, *"Well, you're a good priest then, because you called me back. Others don't."*

Then his tone shifted. *"Father Peter," he said, "I bring you great news today!"*

My spontaneous reaction? *"Oh... oh!"*

He continued: *"The Holy Father has appointed you as Auxiliary Bishop for the Diocese of Phoenix. Will you accept?"*

When I heard **"Holy Father," "you,"** and **"Auxiliary Bishop of Phoenix"** all in the same sentence, I went completely paralyzed. I didn't reply. The longest moment of silence followed. I tried to speak, but no words came out. Finally, after what felt like a Herculean effort, I managed to... nod my head.

Then I heard him ask, with some concern: *"Father Peter, are you still there?"*

I had to apologize again—because in my state of shock, I'd forgotten that he couldn't see me nodding through the phone! I told him, *"Your*

*Eminence, I'm in a state of shock."* He laughed gently and said, *"That's perfectly normal."*

When I finally found my voice, I told him what I've learned throughout my priesthood: **doing God's will** always brings peace and His blessings. Pope Leo XIV represents that will for me now, and so I accept, trusting God will provide every grace I need. I told him my "yes" comes from a simple desire: I just want to be a good priest. If serving as auxiliary bishop is how I can better serve God's people and the Church I love, then I embrace it wholeheartedly.

He thanked me and **instructed me to keep the news confidential** until today's announcement—just between Bishop John and myself. And then, maybe already feeling the weight of this responsibility, I spontaneously asked him, *"Your Eminence, being a bishop is entirely new to me, and I have much to learn. I beg you—please pray for me and be my support when I need counsel and advice."*

He seemed genuinely touched. He said, "I love hearing that. This is a beautiful attitude. You have my cell phone number—call me when you have questions."

I thanked him and asked him to convey my gratitude and love to our Holy Father.