



## TIMOTHY CARDINAL DOLAN

Dear Family of the Archdiocese of New York,

Earlier today, the archdiocese began a restructuring of its pastoral offices. At my request, there has been an examination of these pastoral ministries and offices for many months now, under the direction of the Vicar General. As a result of this study and consultation, several offices and responsibilities are being merged, and a number of programs and ministries returned to a more local and parish-based focus. Our goal in all of this is to ensure that we are responding as effectively as possible to the needs of the people we are called upon to serve in the ten counties and nearly 300 parishes that make up this archdiocese.

This restructuring has, unfortunately, resulted in regrettable lay-offs for some workers at the Cardinal Cooke Building of the Catholic Center and elsewhere around the archdiocese. Such decisions are never easy, but the current financial crunch the archdiocese faces, and the upcoming move to our new offices in 2025, make this the appropriate time to make some tough decisions. I am grateful for the service of all those whose positions are being eliminated. I am also appreciative of the professional and empathetic way that our human resources department has handled this difficult task.

The restructuring is not a one-time event. As with our parish planning, in order for us to be good stewards and administrators, we need to continually evaluate how we are operating and asking if there is a better way forward. We have already seen a reduction in administrative staff, achieved primarily through attrition. It is now standard practice when an employee leaves voluntarily to carefully review that person's responsibilities to see if they can be absorbed by others before deciding whether or not to hire a replacement.

As I mentioned, many of the pastoral office programs will now operate on more of a parish or local level. This responds to a long-standing preference expressed by our priests and auxiliary bishops and puts us in line with the notion of *synodality*, so eloquently expressed by our Holy Father, Pope Francis, that the Church should not operate "top-down" but instead be "bottom-up" listening to the voice of the people of God. One way that we will accomplish this, for instance, is by appointing priest chaplains for the various ethnic communities that make up the archdiocese, including the different African, Asian, Hispanic and Latino communities, who will be responsible for organizing special Masses and celebrations, and responding to each community's unique pastoral needs.

You will not be surprised to learn that there is also a financial consideration to these changes, and we will be saving some money. However, we are also establishing a grant process, so that a good portion of the money saved will be given back to our parishes in the form of grants for ministries for which they may apply. While the precise details are still being worked out, it is my hope that this, too, will help us better respond to local needs and initiatives as they arise, and that this will be a more effective and efficient use of our resources.

Finally, as we approach our national day of Thanksgiving, know that I give thanks to God each day for all of you and the way you help make the Gospel come alive. Be assured of a remembrance in my prayers.

With prayerful best wishes, I am,

Faithfully in Christ,

**+ Cardinal Timothy Dolan**

*Timothy Michael Cardinal Dolan*  
Archbishop of New York