ARCHDIOCESE of HARTFORD
Most Reverend Christopher J. Coyne
Office of the Archbishop

November 22, 2026

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

One of the most beautiful stories told in the Church in the Americas is that, almost 500 years ago on a hill outside of Mexico City, Our Lady appeared to a poor indigenous man named St. Juan Diego. She spoke his indigenous language, she wore the clothing that a princess among his people would wear and he reported that the whole world around her was transformed so that it matched his own indigenous vision of heaven. Reading the anxiety in his heart at that moment, the story tells us that she encouraged him with the words: "Am I not here, I who am your Mother? Are you not under my shadow and protection? Am I not the source of your joy? 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."

Today those first reported words of Mary on our continent echo down through history to all the inhabitants of the Americas as we prepare to celebrate the five hundredth anniversary of that event. As the mother of our Savior, Mary is the source of our joy who seeks to enfold us all in her mantle and embrace each of us with the same love of the incarnation that overshadowed her at the annunciation.

That love, as she reminded us in 1531, is for all of the peoples of the Americas and for those, in particular, who are in any way poor or afflicted. Speaking to St. Juan Diego, she promised to hear their: "weeping, their sadness, and to remedy, to cleanse and nurse all their different troubles, their miseries, and their suffering."

Recognizing that she is still listening today, in our Archdiocese, we are attentive to the reports from immigrant communities that she has been with them in the trials and travails of their journeys and we place *all* recent immigrants, seeking a home, stability, safety and community for themselves and their families under her mantle. Mindful that St. Juan Diego was on the way to domestic responsibilities when he encountered Our Lady, we place our domestic workers, so often left with too little to support their families, under her mantle. Conscious that, in this apparition, she appeared as she would have when she was pregnant with Our Lord, we place all expectant mothers, their children, and all living under the specter of miscarriage or abortion under her mantle. Aware that so many human beings in colonial American society lived lives marked by servitude and slavery when she appeared, we place all victims of human trafficking under her mantle.

As we begin this new liturgical year, we attend to the grief and anxieties of those members of the Body of Christ in our midst. Listening to them along with Our Lady, we collectively renew our commitment to recognize the innate dignity of all and to pursue the common good together. In those commitments and in our active living of them, we know that we become the Church that she asked us to build, where all are heard, seen, tended to, and cared for.

As a new image of Our Lady of Guadalupe is enthroned in our Archdiocese on the coming feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe in anticipation of the 500th Anniversary of the apparitions in 2031, we pray that her intercession will strengthen our resolve and that this icon might be an enduring symbol of our commitment to bring all under her mantle so that they might more fully know the love and compassion of her Son through each of us.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ C. J. Coyne

Most Reverend Christopher J. Coyne
Archbishop of Hartford