

**ARIZONA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE BISHOPS' STATEMENT ON  
THE WHITE RIBBON COALITION'S STATEWIDE DAY OF PRAYER  
May 1, 2005**

The President and Congress are currently attempting to find various legislative solutions that will bring meaningful immigration reform to our country. Few issues are as complex or emotional as the immigration problems facing our country today. It is important, therefore, that the intense rhetoric surrounding this dialogue occur in an atmosphere of civility and respect for the human dignity of all involved.

In light of these developments, we feel it imperative to reiterate the Catholic Church's deep concern over immigration issues, as evidenced by Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Exhortation entitled *Ecclesia in America*. Among other things, this document, urges the Catholic Church of North and Latin America to become the Catholic Church of one America.

It is our belief that, despite current attitudes, Pope John Paul II's vision can become a global model of democracy, economic justice, and prosperity for all. Implementing this plan, however, will require much prayer and hard work to be successful.

We must work and pray to become more holy, more humble, more tolerant, and more loving. It is very hard to practice these virtues, but it is not impossible. Each one of us must make a conscious effort to relate to others, even those who may be different, while practicing these virtues.

In order to further these goals, the **"White Ribbon Campaign of Prayer and Dialogue"** was launched on Good Friday so that religious, political, business, and labor groups would enter into dialogue about a humane solution to the immigration issues facing our society today. During the month of April, the Coalition's goal was to have 100,000 people commit to praying for the leaders of our state so that an environment of dialogue and unity would be created.

To close out the first phase of this campaign, the Coalition is celebrating today a **"Statewide Day of Prayer"** with over 40,000 participants from parishes throughout Arizona. As Catholic Bishops, we support and applaud these types of efforts to establish a climate of solidarity.

Please join us and the 40,000 other Arizonans who are praying for this effort and its success on this Feast of St. Joseph the Worker. God bless.

Most Rev. Gerald F. Kicanas  
Bishop of Tucson

Most Rev. Thomas J. Olmsted  
Bishop of Phoenix

Most Rev. Donald E. Pelotte  
Bishop of Gallup