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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO DELIVERS REMARKS AT ST. MARTIN OF  
TOURS ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Good morning, everybody.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

It is such an honor to be here at St. Martin of Tours with you. And first, I want to give honor to God, without Him this day would not be possible. This church is a spiritual home. This church means so much to this community. This church has been a friend to immigrants from so many parts of the world and a place of faith and a place of understanding. I want to thank, for his great leadership and for all he does for the church community and the larger community, Father Ruiz. Let's thank Father Ruiz for all he does for us.

[Applause]

Also, a special thank you to someone who does so much for the Diocese of Brooklyn and the work that diocese does with the communities, the amazing work of charity that we depend on so much in Brooklyn. Let's thank Vinny LeVien for his fine work. Vinny, where are you – thank you.

[Applause]

And finally, someone who advocates and serves the community and is there and has been for years and years, making sure that community members get the help they need from their city government, your new Council Member Darma Diaz. Congratulations and welcome.

[Applause]

I'll be very brief, but I come here with an important message. And what a good day to share this message with you, because, literally, any day now, the vaccine will arrive in New York City. And that's good news for all of us.

[Applause]

This week, we begin not only a new phase, but the final phase in our battle against the coronavirus. This week, as the vaccine arrives in our city, we see the light at the end of the tunnel from this difficult time we've all been through, because as each and every New Yorker is vaccinated, it is one step closer to ending the coronavirus era. Literally, person by person, even the first vaccination helps to protect people against the disease. And the second vaccination our health care leaders believe provides near perfect protection against the disease. And every time we move forward with the vaccinations, we get to turn the page on everything we've been

through in the year 2020. One thing I think everyone in this city can agree on is we want to turn the page on 2020. We've had enough of 2020, wouldn't you agree?

[Applause]

But every family has been touched by the pain, by the challenge of the coronavirus – every family in this city in one way or another. And we remember those horrible months in March in April, and we lost so many loved ones when families went through suffering, when people lost their jobs by not the thousands, but the hundreds of thousands. This city was the epicenter, the epicenter in the entire nation for this scourge. And yet, New Yorkers fought back, because we are New Yorkers. We don't accept suffering. We don't accept injustice. We fight back. And so, we went from being the epicenter in the spring to the summer when we became one of the safest places in the United States. Every one of you did that. Every one of you did that. When you put on a mask, you did that. When you practice social distancing, you did that. We went from worst to first. Or, to borrow from scripture – the first shall be last and the last shall be first. That's what we achieved. They said we couldn't do it, but we did. They said we couldn't open up our schools for our children, but we did – most cities didn't, New York City did. They said people wouldn't come out to vote in an election because of a pandemic. You know what happened? We set records for how many people participated. New Yorkers are strong. New Yorkers care and New Yorkers brought this city back. And now, we face one last challenge these next few months. And we know we've had a second wave of the disease, but we also know the vaccine is arriving.

So, I'm calling upon all of you to do what you have done so heroically – to, once again, fight back this disease; to, once again, protect each other; to show that love and compassion that New Yorkers have. New Yorkers, maybe sometimes we are stereotyped as rough and tough, but New Yorkers have hearts of gold. We look out for each other. Yes, we're resilient, we're strong, but we care.

So, December and January will be difficult. I'm asking everyone, be careful, take those precautions, please don't travel. We all are so used to the idea of travel at the holidays and going home to loved ones and going home to the countries that we come from. But this is not the year for travel, this is a year to stay close. Keep your gathering small and safe, because, in just a few months, we will turn this corner once and for all.

I'll conclude with this point. And it is, I think, so pertinent in this season – this season when we celebrate the birth of Jesus; this season when we think about the power of redemption and the power of our faith. We should take a moment to think about this city we love. This city that has given so much to all of us, that we have a responsibility to bring this city back, to rebuild after the coronavirus, to move forward. But we need to move forward with a sense of justice and fairness. We need to make a better city together. Someone said to me a few weeks ago, do you think New York City will ever regain its past glory? And I said, I think that's the wrong question, because we all love New York City – that's not a question – we love this place, but we also know it has to be better. It to be a place of fairness for everyone, a place of opportunity for everyone – all our immigrant brothers and sisters who have worked so hard need to know that they can move forward in this city. We need to make it a city that truly embraces and supports everyone. We have work to do to build a better city. So, the question is not can we regain our past glory? It's how do we reach our greater glory? And I think the secret ingredient is right here in the room. I think the power is right here in the room. It is the power of New Yorkers to create something

great. The same people who fought back the coronavirus, who have overcome time and time again, will make us greater in the future. The future in fact is bright, because it's a future that will be built by every one of you.

To all of you, I say thank you. Thank you for all you do to love and support each other. Thank you for being part of this wonderful spiritual community. Thank you for being people of faith who will help this city move forward. I wish everyone a very Merry Christmas. *Feliz Navidad a todos. Muchisimas Gracias.* And God bless you all.

[Applause]

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