

**Message to the Holy Father**  
**Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic**  
**Bishops**  
**Spring General Assembly**  
**June 14-15, 2017**

As is our custom, and with your concurrence, I would like to send the following message to the Holy Father this morning.

Most Holy Father:

Gathering together in General Assembly in the See of Indianapolis, we, the members of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, prayerfully turn our thoughts to Your Holiness.

As the love of Christ fills our hearts, it invites us to share that joy of hope with all around us. We see this lesson in your sacred ministry every day. And each day, we desire to embody that lesson for our own flock. The ministry of Jesus, your ministry and our ministry is one of encounter. In meeting others, we discover the best of ourselves in order that we might offer our best in service to others.

Last month, the world watched the powerful encounter between Your Holiness and the President of the United States. We pray the seeds sown on the common ground of life and religious freedom will bear much fruit. We also reaffirm our pledge to

you and the American people to seek out areas of good collaboration between the Church and the people's elected representatives. We will ensure such collaboration invites all sides into civil dialogue and does not forget the least of our brothers and sisters.

Close to our hearts are the poor, families in need of health care and those immigrating to the United States in search of a safe and secure home. Our shores have long been a beacon of hope for people of all faiths and every nationality. Grateful for the men and women who sacrifice so much for our common defense, the Church will be a steadfast witness for the common good.

Allow us, Holy Father, to also extend a special word of gratitude for your witness on behalf of Christians facing deadly persecution across the world. We join our prayer with yours in solidarity with everyone who suffers because of their faith and their unwavering desire to follow Christ in peace.

Your Holiness, we pray for you and humbly ask you to impart your apostolic blessing on our assembly and the work that lies before it.