



*To His Excellency the Most Reverend Joseph E. Kurtz
Archbishop of Louisville
President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*

On the fiftieth anniversary of the decision of the United States Bishops to institute the Collection for the Church in Latin America, I write to thank you and your brother bishops for this outstanding sign of communion and solidarity with the Church in South America and the Caribbean. I have seen first-hand the good that the continuing generosity of the faithful in the United States has accomplished throughout the world and particularly in Latin America. Through your support, many lives have been touched by the Good News of Christ's merciful love, especially for the poor.

Thanks to the vision of bishops such as Cardinals Richard Cushing and Humberto Medeiros, the Collection for the Church in Latin America took shape and grew as an eloquent means of expressing the bonds of faith and charity uniting Catholics in the United States and their brothers and sisters in the hemisphere. Now, fifty years later, the Collection remains a precious means of sustaining, both spiritually and temporally, the efforts of the local Churches of Latin America and the Caribbean to proclaim the Gospel and to form missionary disciples imbued with zeal for the spread of God's Kingdom of justice, holiness and peace.

From the Andes to the Caribbean, the pastoral outreach of the Church has been furthered not only by the offerings of the faithful in the United States, but

also by the growing sense of communion born of this sharing of gifts. Significant moments in the life of the Church in Latin America and the Caribbean, such as the Medellín Conference and Aparecida Conference, have been accompanied by the prayers and supportive presence of the Catholic community in the United States.

From its inauguration in the spring of 1966, the Collection for the Church in Latin America has continued to grow as a testimonial to the generosity and solidarity which distinguish the faithful of your country. I trust that the support which the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and its individual members give to the Collection will continue to bear rich fruit for the spiritual life and evangelical witness of the Church throughout the hemisphere.

In asking you and your brother bishops, please, to pray for me, I renew my gratitude and prayerful appreciation to all who support the Collection. To all I impart my Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 3 October 2015

Francis