

2025 November Plenary Assembly Message to the Holy Father

Most Holy Father:

With gratitude to God and deep affection, we, the members of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, gathered in plenary assembly in the Premier See of Baltimore, write to assure you of our prayers and communion with you.

Your reflection, offered last June during the Jubilee for Bishops, on our shared ministry continues to encourage and strengthen us. We must be profoundly renewed, as you said, by Jesus the Good Shepherd, preserving and transmitting the prophetic message of hope to a world that, as your predecessor Pope Francis continually taught, is in great need of that virtue.

You remind us that hope comes from having faith in what has been promised, the kingdom of God. But that goal is not simply the eternal salvation of our souls; it requires us to love God and neighbor here and now in this life. As you so clearly stated in your first apostolic exhortation, this means that “charity is not optional but a requirement of true worship.” Charity, true love of God and neighbor is the “logic of the kingdom.” Yet, as shepherds in the United States, we face a growing worldview that is so often at odds with the Gospel mandate to love thy neighbor.

In cities across the United States, our migrant brothers and sisters, many of whom are fellow Catholics, face a culture of fear, hesitant to leave their homes and even to attend church for fear of being randomly harassed or detained. Holy Father, please know that the bishops of the United States, united in our concern, will continue to stand with migrants and defend everyone’s right to worship free from intimidation. We support secure and orderly borders and law enforcement actions in response to dangerous criminal activity, but we cannot remain silent in this challenging hour while the right to worship and the right to due process are undermined.

In our nation, as well as in our world, we face so many challenges in witnessing to the Gospel: the growing narrowness and selfishness of individualism, economic and social impoverishment, growing polarization, animosity, and political violence, the inability to engage in civil discourse, the lack of generosity to work with each other, and constant threats to the life and dignity of every human person, especially the poor, the elderly, and the unborn.

Despite these challenges, we are encouraged by the Christian virtues of hope and charity. Where the world sees others as a problem or a burden, we must, and we will continue to show that each person is loved by God and therefore deserves to be respected, whether in the womb, a stranger, or homeless, hungry, in prison, or dying.

As you know well, the United States is richly blessed with vibrant parishes, dedicated clergy and religious, and many faithful lay women and men who live in hope and charity. With them, on a person-to-person level, our dioceses and our parishes continue to help those in great need. Your Holiness, we humbly ask you to bless them and the whole Church in our Country that we may be ever more faithful disciples of the Lord Jesus and credible witnesses to His kingdom. May the Holy Spirit inspire our assembly and the work that lies before it.