



**Catholic Social
Ministry Gathering**

**Reunión del Ministerio
Social Católico**

“Blessed are the Peacemakers” (Mt 5:9) *A Catholic Message to Congress*

In a country and a world filled with conflict and division, it is the bold and courageous who: work for peace, call for a cessation to the cycle of violence, pause to reflect on our common humanity, and consistently treat the “other” with respect so as to tackle the problems that affect us all. In his 2023 World Day of Peace message, Pope Francis exhorts: *“The time has come ... to heal our society and our planet, to lay the foundations for a more just and peaceful world, and to commit ourselves seriously to a good that is truly common.”*

We represent hundreds of Catholics from around the country who have gathered in person in Washington, DC for the 2023 Catholic Social Ministry Gathering. We are here to affirm the need to strive for peace and justice, to promote healing and reconciliation, to defend all human life and dignity, and to work for the common good in our society and in the world.

As we begin 2023 and lawmakers embark on the 118th Congress, we ask that you consider the following priorities:

Support children and families by passing a strengthened Child Tax Credit

The Child Tax Credit is a powerful pro-family and anti-poverty tool, but it must be strengthened so its full effects can benefit those children most in need. The credit should be expanded so it is fully refundable, prioritizes the poorest children, and continues to include mixed-status families. We urge members of Congress to engage in dialogue and work together to improve the Child Tax Credit to promote our shared goals of strengthening families and ensuring that no children grow up in poverty.

Support hungry and vulnerable people with robust international humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding assistance

Increase funding for international poverty-reducing development and humanitarian programs in Fiscal Year 2024 to address global hunger and conflict (see chart of accounts supported by USCCB and CRS). More than 48.9 million people are currently on the brink of starvation while the number of people living in poverty has increased for the first time in 20 years. Armed conflict, as well as political and economic crises, in places such as Ukraine, Myanmar, Nigeria, and Nicaragua, are also disrupting progress, driving more than 89 million people from their homes, more than ever before. This assistance, which must maintain provisions protecting life, will reduce hunger and poverty, address the root causes of conflict, and advance peace and security.

Pass legislation providing our new Afghan neighbors with a pathway to permanent legal status

During the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021, thousands of Afghan nationals, many of whom risked their lives to serve alongside U.S. servicemembers, were relocated to the United States. Most entered the country with humanitarian parole, which only authorizes them to remain in the United States for up to two years, and expires in August 2023 for the majority of this population. They need a legal pathway to real and lasting safety. We ask Congress to pass legislation, such as the Afghan Adjustment Act (S. 4787/H.R. 8685), a bipartisan bill introduced during the previous Congress, to allow these resettled Afghans—who would otherwise have faced a dire future under Taliban rule—to apply to become lawful permanent residents.