
A CATHOLIC MESSAGE TO CONGRESS
JANUARY 2025

Missionaries of Hope, Advocates of Justice

“The family merits special attention on the part of those responsible for the common good, since it is the basic cell of society. Families ... ensure the future and the renewal of society.”

- Pope Francis, *Address at the International Airport “El Alto,” La Paz (Bolivia), July 8, 2015*

As Catholic advocates representing communities across the country, we have gathered this week at the 2025 Catholic Social Ministry Gathering. As ever, we offer a message of hope to our elected leaders and re-affirm our advocacy for policies that promote thriving communities, defend all life and dignity, and advance the causes of dignity and justice for each of our brothers and sisters at home and abroad. We lift up in a particular way policies that strengthen families who are struggling in the U.S. and around the world. Policies and programs can assist the most vulnerable to achieve security, peace, and flourishing. We encourage those tasked with such a lofty vocation¹ as public service to join us in this work. As lawmakers embark on the 119th Congress, we ask that you consider the following priorities:

Ensure that all tax and budget decisions support children and families and help them flourish, especially families experiencing poverty.

As you consider a budget reconciliation package that involves tax and other economic policies that affect families, we ask you to keep in mind how these decisions will impact the most vulnerable families. The life and dignity of families should be the final guiding principle of all economic and tax policy. We urge members of Congress to engage in dialogue and work together to use budget reconciliation to support the needs of children and families, especially those experiencing poverty.

Support families and children around the world with robust international humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding assistance.

We urge Congress to pass Fiscal Year 2025 appropriations now and ensure the highest funding levels possible for international assistance in Fiscal Years 2025 and 2026 (see chart of accounts supported by USCCB and CRS). The Church views international assistance as an essential tool to protect life, uphold human dignity, and pursue sustainable solutions to the world’s toughest challenges. Making up less than 1% of the annual federal budget, poverty-reducing foreign assistance is a small, yet smart, investment to accomplish Church priorities and advance U.S. interests: to foster economic opportunity, promote peace and security, and project our core values abroad.

Preserve and support humanitarian protections for vulnerable families, including refugee resettlement.

The U.S. has a proud history of providing life-saving protection to people in need, including those fleeing religious and political persecution. Our nation is compelled by its founding principles, moral responsibilities, and international obligations to provide opportunities for vulnerable people to request humanitarian relief. These protections are one crucial way our society defends human life and furthers the common good. Protections such as refugee resettlement help those most vulnerable to start anew, while allowing beneficiaries to enrich U.S. communities through their economic and social contributions. We urge Congress to support this bipartisan legacy by preserving and strengthening access to asylum, refugee resettlement, protections for unaccompanied children, assistance for victims of human trafficking, temporary forms of relief, and other humanitarian protections already enshrined in our law.

¹ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 180.