

Archbishop Pierre,  
Dear Brothers in Christ,

Thank you, Archbishop Lori for recognizing me for the purpose of offering these reflections.

In the Fourth Gospel, Jesus prays that the Apostles might be confirmed in the truth. Even then it was not a certain enterprise. Pilate, the Roman Governor of the time, doubted that there was truth or at least asked “What is truth?”

Centuries later we are still faced by those who would question the existence of truth or at least question our conclusions about revealed truth. Part of imitating the notion of *Doulos tou theou* presented by Bishop Murphy is being an authentic slave to the truth.

We are earnestly engaged in the second year of a Eucharistic revival which hopes to renew the faith of Catholics in our Country about the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. It is encouraging to see how the mission is advancing and it is appropriate to praise those who are so generous with time, talent, and treasure to bring this national project to a successful conclusion, hoped, however, to continue in its mission to reinforce our faith.

That effort is certainly an attempt on our part to announce the truth about the mystery of the Eucharist and the real presence of our Lord and Savior, Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. We want to reinforce the recognition that our participation at the Mass is ultimately our participation in the saving act of Jesus Christ on Calvary.

On a less positive topic, the US continues to seek ways to address the challenges of immigration and the situation of those who cross or would like to cross our borders in the south. We strive to encourage those well-intentioned lawmakers who are seeking to enact effective and humane border management as part of a framework of comprehensive immigration reforms.

We cannot fail to see the face of Christ in all of those who need our assistance, especially the poor and the vulnerable. I did not do a survey, but I would imagine that many of us have ancestors who either recently or

at least in the 19<sup>th</sup> century came to these shores looking for a better life. Even those on the *Mayflower* were looking for freedom of religion and a new life.

The Catholic Church is committed to the common good, we always cooperate in the administration of humanitarian aid with local, state, and federal officials, and we do this in partnership with faith communities and like-minded organizations. I know that this can put us at odds with certain groups or those who fear immigration, but our commitment is to the truth about the human condition and the dignity of the human person from conception to natural death.

For the same reason our hearts and our efforts go out to Haiti and the constant turmoil and unrest there. For seven years I lived next door to Haiti when I was stationed in the Dominican Republic. It was chaotic then, but it seems organized in comparison with the reality today. Perhaps we can find ways to see if there are possibilities to lift this good people from chaos to a more modern, governed State.

It is remarkable that the first country south of the US to become independent in 1804 now struggles to know some form of order, have a government, and meet the needs of its citizenry. At the very least I recommend the people of this sister nation to the charity of your prayers.

We continue to pray and act in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Ukraine. Several of us have been privileged to make a visit to the country and to learn first-hand about the struggles of the population there. I spent several days before Christmas in Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia to visit the US military deployed in those locations and was impressed with the organization and the response in those countries to the needs of refugees and the wounded. In a Latvian hospital I spoke with soldiers there for treatment. They all wanted to go back and fight for their homeland, including one who did not look old enough to shave.

From 27 to 31 December I visited Lviv, Kyiv, Bucha, and Irpin and was amazed by the devastation and the stamina of the people. There were also occasions to spend time underground during bombing raids or at least the threat thereof. I am grateful to Archbishop Gudziak for organizing the

visit and to my hosts who introduced me into the experience that is currently theirs.

We continue our prayers for an end to the aggression and the invasion. There are no easy solutions.

Our thoughts and prayers also go to Archbishop Gomez and the faithful of Los Angeles. The disrespect for the truths and traditions of our faith, for the legendary commitment of religious women to building up society, and the tarnishing of what has so often been called the national sport harken back to the “know nothings” of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. To our prayers for greater respect, Archbishop Gomez, Cardinal Dolan, and I added a clear statement on Monday deploring the planned activity and inviting all to pray the Litany of the Sacred Heart tomorrow on the Solemnity.

The collaboration of Canada and the United States for the continental phase of the up-coming Synod enabled many people to take part in the time of discernment, listening, and openness to the Holy Spirit. I recommend the summary document prepared so ably by Bishop Flores, Bishop Poisson, the other bishop members of the task force and their collaborators. It is published in English, Spanish, and French. The same document reveals some lacunae in the ecclesiology and the preparation of the faithful. That, too, can be a grace, if we help to fill some of those gaps.

As you know, days after the November plenary assembly I participated in a meeting of the representatives of the continental synodal process. We heard about spiritual conversation and learned about some of the challenges going forward. The willingness to assist on the part of the small staff of the Synod Office was evident.

It is refreshing to see the research to recognize the great figures who have walked before us. I am pleased that once again we will hear about the introduction of new Causes for Canonization. It is a source of encouragement for all of us. From personal experience I know that the long, detailed process is not simple, but positive results will enliven the faith for all of us. It is a witness that there is truth and men and women who have given witness to it and in this case gave their lives for the truth. For

us it is significant that the first saint with a US passport was an immigrant and worked among immigrants to reaffirm their dignity, lift them from poverty, and to cajole them to help those poorer than themselves.

Thank you, dear Brothers, for your attention and your tireless ministry to those we are privileged to serve.