

**Message to the Holy Father**  
**June 2023 Plenary Assembly**

Most Holy Father:

Gathering in Plenary Assembly in the See of Orlando, we, the members of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, prayerfully turn our thoughts to Your Holiness, especially as you are recovering from surgery. Please know of our prayers, and those of all the faithful for your continued health and well-being.

Recognizing our continual need for conversion, we once again have devoted time at this gathering for prayerful reflection, dialogue, and listening to one another in fraternal communion. The experience of the synodal journey over the past year and a half has encouraged us to continue the “renewal” proposed by the Second Vatican Council. Earlier this year, representatives among us concluded a week-long retreat with our brother bishops from Canada to pray, discern, and synthesize the insights and contributions heard during the North American Continental Stage. Accompanying the faithful, with their deep love for Jesus Christ, along the synodal path has been a grace for our Church. We prayerfully anticipate the Universal Phase later this year with Your Holiness.

Holy Father, we ask for your prayers as we continue to restore understanding and participation in the Holy Eucharist through the Eucharistic Revival. Beginning this week, on the Feast of Corpus Christi, we have invited all parishes in the United States to experience anew the encounter with Christ in the celebration of the liturgy. We take to heart your reflection on the Eucharist “that the disproportion between the immensity of the gift and the smallness of the one who receives it is infinite, and it cannot fail to surprise us. Nonetheless, through the mercy of the Lord, the gift is entrusted to the Apostles so that it might be carried to every man and woman” (*Desiderio Desideravi*, no. 3).

We thank you, Holy Father, for your constant example in addressing the pressing situation of migrants and refugees globally. It is a sign of our times that millions are forced to migrate due to poverty, climate change, war, adverse political situations, and hunger. The Church in the United States continues to respond with welcome for our brothers and sisters in need, and we continue to work to improve conditions that compel people to seek refuge. We join with you in prayer for all migrants, refugees, and vulnerable people on the move.

We also wish to convey our gratitude for your teaching on the sanctity of marriage, the beauty of human sexuality, and our need for humility in respecting God’s creation. We affirm the truth you proclaimed in *Amoris Laetitia*, “Let us not fall into the sin of trying to replace the Creator. [W]e are called to protect our humanity, and this means, in the first place, accepting it and respecting it as it was created” (no. 56). May we continue to share this truth with the help of the Holy Spirit!

Sadly, on this very day as this assembly meets, the state of Florida is set to execute a convicted man. We share in your opposition to the death penalty. Capital punishment is indeed a false answer that does not solve the problem for which it is invoked and introduces new elements of

destruction. We pray for the victims of heinous crimes and for the protection of the inalienable dignity of every human being.

Your Holiness, we pray for you and humbly ask you to bless our assembly and the work that lies before it.