

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

Most Holy Father:

Gathering in Plenary Assembly in the Premier See of Baltimore, we, the members of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, ask for your prayers and blessing.

Sadly, as we meet, the destruction and devastation of war in areas across the globe weighs heavily on all our hearts. We must not, as you have said, “forget ... Ukraine, let us not forget Palestine, let us not forget Israel, and let us not forget the many other regions where war still rages.” As you frequently have stated, “War is a defeat.” It is truly a failure within the human family.

Through the courage of international aid workers and the generosity of the faithful in the United States, much-needed comfort has reached the suffering peoples of Ukraine, Israel, and Gaza and other areas of conflict. We join you in fervent prayer for peace in our world and together we call for a special defense of the most vulnerable in all areas of turmoil.

In the land of our Lord’s birth, the fighting has caused the death of thousands of innocent people, and the humanitarian crisis grows worse as each day passes. At the very least, we renew our call for peace and that measures be taken in Gaza to facilitate humanitarian aid and the release of hostages. We humbly pray through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, that there may be peace in a world torn by conflict and strife.

We gather in fraternal communion, following the recent conclusion of the Synod’s first session in Rome. Over the next year we look forward to facilitating prayer and dialogue around the reflections of the synthesis report. Accompanying the faithful, with their deep love for Jesus Christ, along the synodal path has been a grace for our Church. As during the synod, we also pause in prayerful reflection and discernment as we meet here.

We are grateful for your consistent teaching on the need to care for our common home and experience “ecological conversion.” The bishops of the United States share this commitment with people of good will throughout our country and, in light of the teaching of *Laudate Deum*, we commit to continuing these efforts.

We are also grateful for your special blessing and encouraging words for our Eucharistic Revival. We have now entered the “Year of Parish Renewal” where parishes throughout the United States are strengthening our spiritual life through Eucharistic devotion, missionary activities, and the faithful celebration of the Mass.

Your Holiness, there is much on our agenda for these days here in Baltimore. We humbly ask you to pray for us and please be assured of our continued prayers for you.