



Message from the Holy Father  
to participants in the 2025 Catholic Social Ministry Gathering of  
the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops  
January 20, 2025

Dear brothers and sisters  
of the United States of America,

The Jubilee Year that we have just begun makes us all “pilgrims of hope.” It is an opportunity to place the challenge of “organizing hope” at the center of the pastoral mission. This is what it is all about: being a “Church which goes forth”, being able to sustain “with words and actions” the hope with which so many families have always come to these blessed lands.

I hope that the Catholic Social Ministry Gathering of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops will become a sign of unity, to “build bridges of reconciliation, inclusion, and fraternity” (*Address to the Members of the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America, June 21, 2024*). You can achieve it, because I know that each one of you works very hard to recognize Jesus Christ in those most in need: the excluded, the discarded, the poor, the migrants.

You are a Church that does not trace plans in the air, but that goes to the concrete. You work on solid ground and with the people. You are aware that “realities are greater than ideas,” a principle that “impels us to put the word into practice, to perform works of justice and charity which make that word fruitful” (Ap. Exhort. *Evangelii gaudium*, 233).

The service that you carry out, both within and outside of the Church, makes possible a social dialogue that listens and converses “with” the poor, always “at the service of the common good” (Enc. Letter *Fratelli tutti*, 154).

Do not be afraid to continue being “protagonists of history”, working together “body to body, person to person” (*Address to participants in the meeting of Popular Movements*, September 20, 2024), as part of the “great human family” that makes up the entire American continent.

Saint John Paul II said that the duty of solidarity makes us “all really responsible for all” (Enc. Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, 38). “Everyone, everyone, everyone,” because “everyone is connected.” Therefore, if we fail to promote social justice, we will not be able to guarantee the dignity of every person, of every child who comes into this world, of every hopeful young person who sets foot in the Americas.

Dear young people present in this gathering: Do not let yourselves be robbed of hope! Be capable of translating it “into decisions and concrete gestures of concern, justice, solidarity and care for our common home” (*Homily of the World Day of the Poor*, November 14, 2021). You are key to putting an end to this piecemeal war that shakes the world.

Sisters and brothers of the twenty national organizations and ten departments of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops who are organizing this event: I encourage you to have the courage to continue to be pilgrims of hope, as your ancestors were.

May God bless you and may Mary, Mother of God, watch over you. And don't forget to pray for me. I will pray for you as well.

Rome, Saint John Lateran, January 20, 2025