



The Catholic Light

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

Weekly E-Newsletter

November 13, 2025

Special edition recapping U.S. Bishops' Fall Plenary Assembly in Baltimore

U.S. Bishops release 'special pastoral message' on immigration



The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops approved a “special pastoral message on immigration” Nov. 12, voicing “our concern

here for immigrants” at their annual fall plenary assembly in Baltimore.

The statement came as a growing number of bishops have acknowledged that some of the Trump administration’s immigration policies risk presenting the church with both practical challenges in administering pastoral support and charitable endeavors, as well as religious liberty challenges.

The full text of the bishops’ Special Pastoral Message follows:

"As pastors, we the bishops of the United States are bound to our people by ties of communion and compassion in Our Lord Jesus Christ. We are disturbed when we see among our people a climate of fear and anxiety around questions of profiling and immigration enforcement. We are saddened by the state of contemporary debate and the vilification of immigrants. We are concerned about the conditions in detention centers and the lack of access to pastoral care. We lament that some immigrants in the United States have arbitrarily lost their legal status. We are troubled by threats against the sanctity of houses of worship and the special nature of hospitals and schools. We are grieved when we meet parents who fear being detained when taking their children to school and when we try to console family members who have already been separated from their loved ones.

"Despite obstacles and prejudices, generations of immigrants have made enormous contributions to the well-being of our nation. We as Catholic bishops love our country and pray for its peace and prosperity. For this very reason, we feel compelled now in this environment to raise our voices in defense of God-given human dignity.

"*Catholic teaching* exhorts nations to recognize the fundamental dignity of all persons, including immigrants. We bishops advocate for a meaningful reform of our nation’s immigration laws and procedures. Human dignity and national security are not in conflict. Both are possible if people of good will work together.

"We recognize that nations have a responsibility to regulate their borders and establish a just and orderly immigration system for the sake of the common good. Without such processes, immigrants face the risk of trafficking and other forms of exploitation. Safe and legal pathways serve as an antidote to such risks.

"The Church's teaching rests on the foundational concern for the human person, as created in the image and likeness of God (*Genesis* 1:27). As pastors, we look to Sacred Scripture and the example of the Lord Himself, where we find the wisdom of God's compassion. The priority of the Lord, as the Prophets remind us, is for those who are most vulnerable: the widow, the orphan, the poor, and the stranger (*Zechariah* 7:10). In the Lord Jesus, we see the One who became poor for our sake (*2 Corinthians* 8:9), we see the Good Samaritan who lifts us from the dust (*Luke* 10:30–37), and we see the One who is found in the least of these (*Matthew* 25). The Church's concern for neighbor and our concern here for immigrants is a response to the Lord's command to love as He has loved us (*John* 13:34).

"To our immigrant brothers and sisters, we stand with you in your suffering, since, when one member suffers, all suffer (*cf. 1 Corinthians* 12:26). You are not alone!

"We note with gratitude that so many of our clergy, consecrated religious, and lay faithful already accompany and assist immigrants in meeting their basic human needs. We urge all people of good will to continue and expand such efforts.

"We oppose the indiscriminate mass deportation of people. We pray for an end to dehumanizing rhetoric and violence, whether directed at immigrants or at law enforcement. We pray that the Lord may guide the leaders of our nation, and we are grateful for past and present opportunities to dialogue with public and elected officials. In this dialogue, we will continue to advocate for meaningful immigration reform.

As disciples of the Lord, we remain men and women of hope, and hope does not disappoint! (cf. Romans 5:5)

May the mantle of Our Lady of Guadalupe enfold us all in her maternal and loving care and draw us ever closer to the heart of Christ."

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U.S. Bishops overwhelmingly back ban on 'gender interventions' by Catholic health care



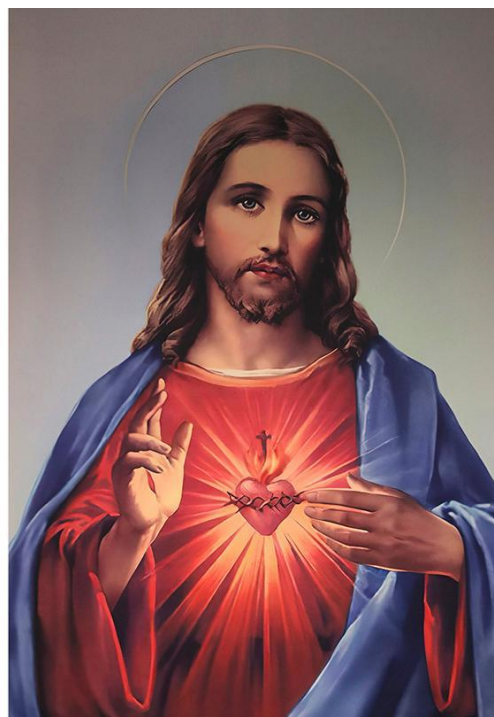
The U.S. bishops have approved an updated version of their guiding document on Catholic health care, with substantial revisions that include explicit prohibitions against so-called “gender-affirming care.”

Proposed updates to the “Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services,” or ERDs, were overwhelmingly accepted during the Nov. 12 session of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ fall 2025 plenary assembly.

The ERDs – developed in consultation with medical professionals and theologians, and regularly reviewed by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops – articulate ethical standards for health care in light of church teaching, and provide authoritative guidance on moral issues encountered by Catholic health care.

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Bishops will consecrate U.S. to Sacred Heart of Jesus for 250th anniversary of its founding



As the U.S. marks its 250th anniversary next year, the U.S. bishops will consecrate the nation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The decision was taken during a Nov. 11 session of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' fall plenary assembly in Baltimore.

Ahead of the vote, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana, chair of the USCCB's Committee for Religious Liberty, said the consecration would take place at the USCCB's spring assembly in June 2026, which concludes on the solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

"To help Catholics prepare for the consecration, we would develop prayer resources, including a novena that will lead up to the solemnity of the Sacred Heart," said Bishop Rhoades.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which traces its roots to at least the second century, grew during the Middle Ages and was later extended to the universal church following Christ's revelations of his Sacred Heart to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, a 17th-century French woman religious.

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Bishops approve new National Eucharistic Congress for 2029



The U.S. bishops have given the green light to hold the 11th National Eucharistic Congress in the summer of 2029, in a Nov. 12 vote on the final public day of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Fall Plenary Assembly.

The location of the event has not yet been made public. However, the possible cities have been narrowed down to three, according to Bishop Cozzens, and OSV News has learned that site visits have been completed and that the city announcement likely will come next spring.

The 2029 congress follows the successful 10th National Eucharistic Congress that took place July 2024 in Indianapolis, as part of the larger three-year National Eucharistic Revival.

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Vatican gives final approval to new Liturgy of the Hours edition coming in 2027



The faithful can expect a new edition of the Liturgy of the Hours by Easter 2027, according to Bishop Steven J. Lopes, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Divine Worship who made the announcement Nov. 11, during the bishops' fall meeting.

To loud applause from the bishops' assembled, Bishop Lopes, head of the Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter, shared the news that the Vatican's Dicastery for Divine Worship issued a decree approving the new edition of the church's ancient daily liturgical prayer.

The Liturgy of the Hours, or the Divine Office, is the daily prayer of the church and sanctifies the day with prayer. This liturgical prayer also takes different set forms within the Latin Catholic and

23 Eastern Catholic churches that together make the worldwide Catholic Church, and each form has prayers that vary in accordance with each particular church's calendar.

The standard Liturgy of the Hours in the Roman rite of the Latin Church is divided into five "hours" or parts prayed at different times each day: the office of readings; morning prayer or lauds; daytime prayer; evening prayer or vespers; and night prayer or compline. These five parts, which draw from Scripture, particularly the Psalms, usually take less than 20 minutes to pray.

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As dozens of local students head to NCYC next week, Bishops get update on unique digital encounter planned with Pope Leo XIV



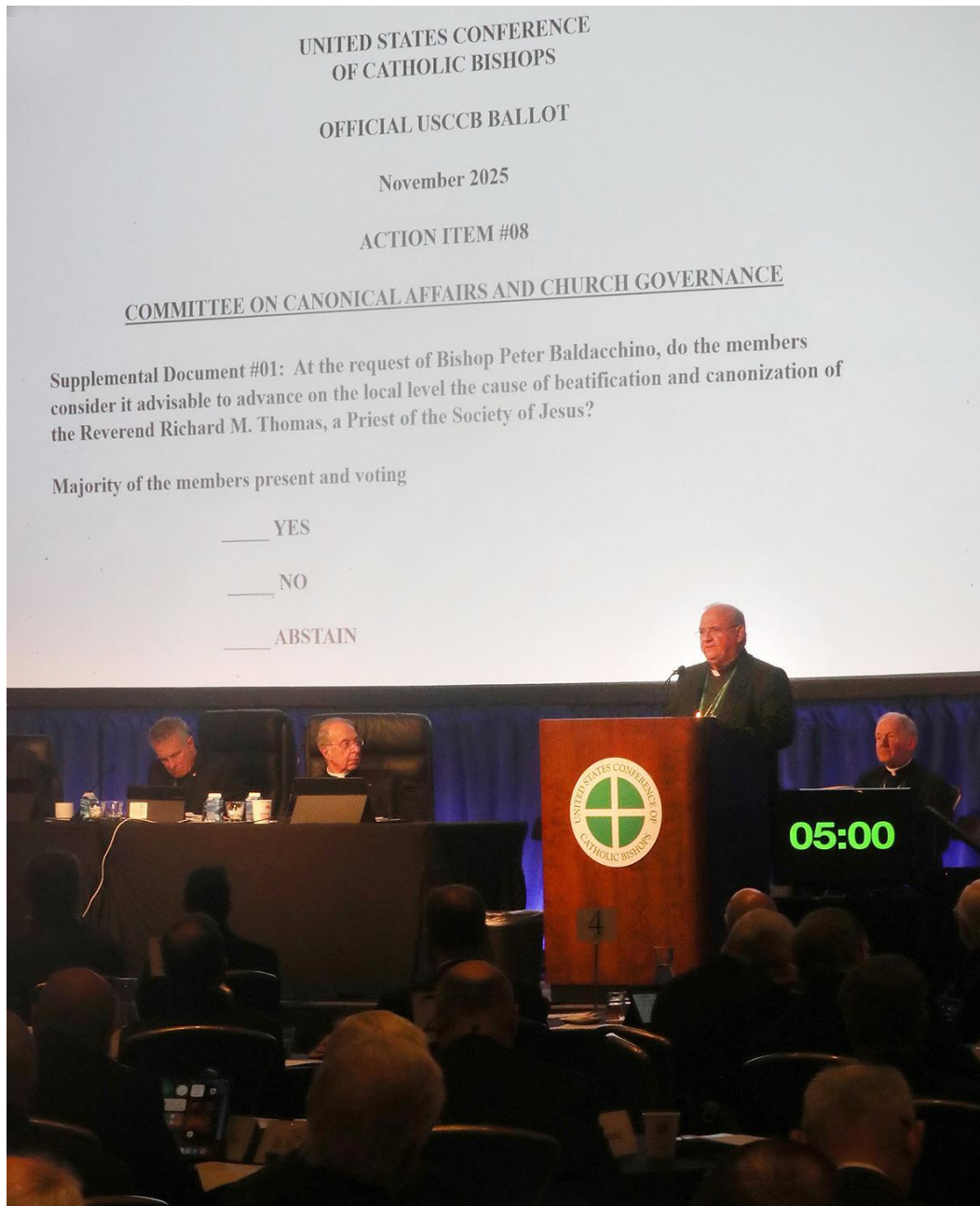
Pope Leo XIV is eager and excited to enter into a dialogue with young people in America in a unique digital encounter, according to those facilitating the Nov. 21 event taking place at the National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis.

On Nov. 12, the upcoming encounter was highlighted during the U.S. bishops' fall plenary assembly by Archbishop Nelson J. Pérez of Philadelphia alongside others involved in organizing the event. Archbishop Pérez told reporters that the encounter "reflects the Holy Father's desire to connect with young people" and it "represents a virtual visit of the Holy Father to them."

"The Holy Father's choice to encounter the American youth, as he will do next week, is an expression of his closeness to the youth of the world," he added. "This historic moment will mark a powerful opportunity for young people to witness the beauty of the universal church with our Holy Father."

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U.S. Bishops advance new sainthood cause for 'good samaritan' Jesuit priest



The U.S. bishops voted overwhelmingly Nov. 11 to support the advancement of a canonization cause for Jesuit Father Richard Thomas.

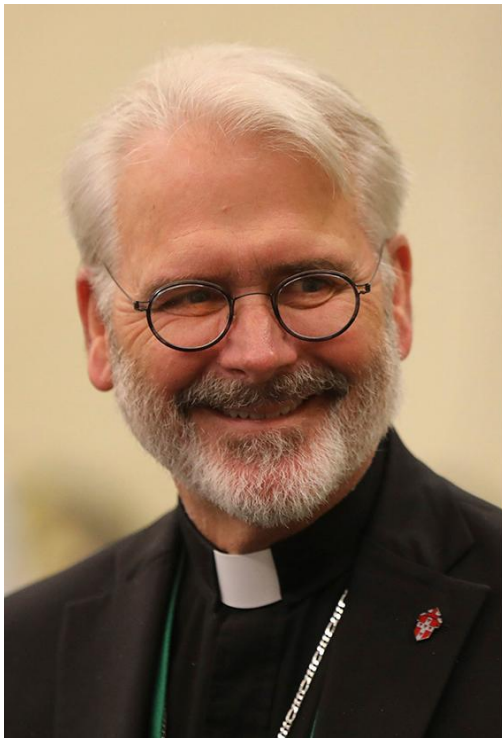
The agenda item was presented by Bishop Thomas J. Paprocki of Springfield, Illinois, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Canonical Affairs and Church Governance. He was joined in the presentation by Bishop Peter Baldacchino of Las Cruces, New Mexico, the diocese in which Father Thomas died on May 8, 2006.

The bishops' consultation is a necessary step ahead of formally opening a canonization cause.

This milestone in advancing Father Thomas' cause comes just a month after release of Pope Leo XIV's first apostolic letter, "Dilexi Te," which outlines the church's rationale for and record of service to the poor. Father Thomas' life reflects many of the stories of saints and holy figures to whom Pope Leo's letter draws attention. Father Thomas is being raised up as a model at the same time that U.S. bishops are drawing attention to the ongoing crisis involving immigrants in the United States.

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Archbishop Coakley, Bishop Flores elected President and Vice President of USCCB



The U.S. bishops' conference has elected its next president, Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City.

Archbishop Coakley was elected by a narrow margin — 54%, or 128 votes out of 237 — in a third-ballot runoff against Bishop Daniel E. Flores of Brownsville, Texas, who subsequently was elected vice president of the conference on the first ballot, a fraction of a percent over the majority.

This was Archbishop Coakley's fourth time on a ballot for the bishops' top leadership, with an appearance on each triennial ballot since 2016. At 70, he would have been ineligible to stand for office in three years, as bishops must be able to complete a three-year term ahead of the mandatory retirement age of 75.

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Outgoing USCCB President warns against partisanship; Nuncio urges Bishops to follow pope's 'maps of hope'



In his farewell address to his brother bishops, Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services, outgoing president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, emphasized the need to “convince people to listen to each other” amid polarization.

“We have to draw on our unity to illustrate that civil discourse is not only possible, but the most authentically human way

forward,” he told the bishops gathered Nov. 11 for their annual fall plenary assembly in Baltimore.

Archbishop Broglio said he had mentioned to Pope Leo in October that “some of our faithful listen more readily to sound bytes, the sirens of political discourse, or whatever confirms their conclusions and partisan leanings” instead of “hearing their pastors and us.”

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'Leo from Chicago': Vatican releases new documentary on Pope's early years



A new documentary released by the Vatican on Pope Leo XIV's early life is more than just a film about the life of the new pope, but the story of an ordinary person who answered a calling to serve the church, said Vatican News journalist Salvatore Cernuzio.

Released Nov. 10, the documentary “Leo from Chicago” chronicles the pope’s humble beginnings in Dolton, Illinois, as well as his early years as an Augustinian.

“A colleague told me, ‘It certainly seems like you have told the story of a saint,’” Cernuzio said in a phone interview with OSV News Nov. 11.

“I believe it’s not a question of sainthood; it’s about a person who was born with a meek character. His charism is truly this meekness and, above all, how he developed these particular traits of dialogue, of friendship, of community.”

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