

## A Message from Archbishop Lori on Bishops' Pastoral Document



June 22, 2021

Dear Friends in Christ,

In these days following the conclusion of the Spring General Assembly of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the need to clarify the decision the bishops reached has become evident. In a decisive vote, the bishops decided to draft a pastoral document to affirm the meaning, importance and value of the Eucharist.

It is important to note that the bishops ***did not*** vote to implement a national policy to deny Holy Communion to politicians who reject Church teaching. Rather, in light of the **decline** in belief and participation in the Eucharist, the bishops voted to permit their Committee on Doctrine to begin drafting a pastoral document on the Eucharist. As Archbishop José Gomez, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, recently stated "...our desire is to deepen our people's awareness of this great mystery of faith, and to awaken their amazement at this divine gift, in which we have communion with the living God. That is our pastoral purpose in writing this document."

This pastoral document is to serve as a foundation for the multi-year Eucharistic Revival Project, a major national effort to reignite Eucharistic faith in our country. It is not disciplinary in nature, nor is it targeted at any one person or class of persons. The document is outlined to address the Church's teachings on personal conscience for every Catholic, including bishops, to live in accordance with the truth, goodness and beauty of the Eucharist we celebrate.

I am aware that many will have further questions regarding conclusions reached at the recent Bishops' meeting. Please find some common questions pertaining to this issue and their corresponding answers.

For information and resources about our own Year of the Eucharist in the Archdiocese of Baltimore, visit our archdiocesan website.

With kindest personal regards, I remain

Faithfully in Christ,

Most Reverend William E. Lori  
Archbishop of Baltimore

## **Why are the bishops doing this now?**

For some time now, a major concern of the bishops has been the declining belief and understanding of the Eucharist among the Catholic faithful. This was a deep enough concern, that the theme of the bishops' strategic plan for 2021-2024 is Created Anew by the Body and Blood of Christ: Source of Our Healing and Hope. This important document on the Eucharist will serve as a foundation for the multi-year Eucharistic Revival Project, a major national effort to reignite Eucharistic faith in our country. It was clear from the intensity and passion expressed in the individual interventions made by the bishops during last week's meeting that each bishop deeply loves the Eucharist.

## **Did the bishops vote to ban politicians from receiving Holy Communion?**

No, this was not up for vote or debate. The bishops made no decision about barring anyone from receiving Holy Communion. Each Catholic – regardless of whether they hold public office or not – is called to continual conversion, and the U.S. bishops have repeatedly emphasized the obligation of all Catholics to support human life and dignity and other fundamental principles of Catholic moral and social teaching.

## **Are the bishops going to issue a national policy on withholding Communion from politicians?**

No. There will be no national policy on withholding Communion from politicians. The intent is to present a clear understanding of the Church's teachings to bring heightened awareness among the faithful of how the Eucharist can transform our lives and bring us closer to our creator and the life he wants for us.

## **Did the Vatican tell the bishops not to move forward on drafting the document?**

No. The Holy See did encourage the bishops to engage in dialogue and broad consultation. Last week's meeting was the first part of that process. It is important to note that collaboration and consultation among the bishops will be key in the drafting of this document.