

Overview of the USCCB General Meeting November 11-14, 2019 Baltimore, MD

I was honored to attend the USCCB meeting in Fall in Baltimore as an Official Observer for NCCW and to represent you our members. Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo, President of the USCCB opened the meeting with prayer, introduction of new Bishops since their last meeting in June. He recognized the retired Bishops and offered a prayer for the deceased and the Holy Father's prayer for future priests.

Remarks by the Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Christophe Pierre were followed by Cardinal DiNardo who gave his presidential address and the National Advisory Council Board gave their report. There was a preliminary presentation of Action Items.

There were daily Masses and prayer time at the beginning of each meeting along with praying the Angelus before lunch. We were able to have lunch and break time with the Bishops and engage them in talking about NCCW.

Voting on the following action items took place:

- Committee on Priorities and Plans – Action Item #01- Does the USCCB General Assembly approve the Revised Strategic Priorities for the 2021-24 USCCB Strategic Plan? – passed
- Committee on Budget and Finance – Action Item #02 – Do the members accept the recommendation of the Committee on Budget and Finance for approval of the 2020 Proposed Budgets? Passed
- Committee on Budget and Finance – Action Item #03 – Do the diocesan and eparchial bishops accept the recommendation of the Committee on budget and Finance for approval of a 3% increase in the diocesan assessment for 2021 to \$12,473.425?
Did not pass, 130 votes were needed

Mid afternoon Prayer

On Monday afternoon there were reports from the committees and they can be obtained by looking at the USCCB website. I will highlight a few of the comments

- There is a renewed impetus toward the New Evangelization
- Based on the latest pew research the Bishops were asked to encourage pastors and administrators to teach that the Eucharist is the body of Christ
- They want to make sure Catholic education is more accessible and the USCCB will share how things worked in other areas
- Archbishop Blair reported that RCIA will now be called OCIA the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults.
- In Bishop Barron's report he mentioned the unaffiliated and how to get them back. Get the young people involved in the path of justice; stop dumbing down the faith; turn every parish in to a Missionary Society and creatively use the new media – spend the money on social media.
- Julianne Stanz reported that 50% of youth are from broken homes. We need more programs of devotion to Mary. Bring broken families together for a maternal love.
- Archbishop Naumann discussed a program called "Walking With Moms in Need" and to join the year of service from 3/25/2020 – 3/25/2021. 500,000 pregnant women are helped each year. Thousands of pregnant and parenting moms are helped each year through Catholic Charities programs and help agencies. The "Prayer for Pregnant

Mother” cards are available on the USCCB website. Pope Francis challenges us to turn to the parishes for help.

- Bishop Frank J. Dewane of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development gave a presentation on the topic of gun violence. He stated the Gun Policies supported by the USCCB:
 1. Assault Weapon Ban
 2. Universal Background checks (although not as effective)
 3. Limit large capacity magazines
 4. Federal Law to Criminalize Gun Trafficking
 5. Limitation on handguns
 6. Gun locks and safe storage – educational campaign
 7. Assessment of violence in media

Tuesday morning was devoted to voting. Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles was voted in as the new president of the USCCB and Archbishop Allen Vigneron of Detroit is the Vice President.

The Voting was performed electronically and then votes were tallied from those in Rome which were sent and added to the totals.

You can go to USCCB.org for the results of all the voting and you can actually watch a video of the meeting by clicking on “The USCCB General Assembly” and then scroll down to “Video on Demand” and click on that.

On Wednesday the meeting did not start until 11:00 am.

The following reports were given:

- Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo – update on Implementation of Third Party Reporting Mechanism
- Bishop Shelton J. Farbre - Ad Hoc Committee against Racism – Open Wide Our Hearts
- Bishop Gregory John Mansour and Sean Callahan – Report on CRS’s progress supporting the Global Church
- Sister Donna Markham, OP, President and CEO of Catholic Charities had a presentation on a new Pilot program that will help reduce homelessness, decrease hospitalizations and help connect those that need healthcare
- Anna Marie Gallagher – Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC) gave an update on the Asylum Project
- NCCW was on the agenda last for that day. Bishop Parkes introduced me and I gave a 2 minute greeting and highlights of NCCW followed by a showing of the 3 minute video “We Are NCCW”. As I walked back to my seat I could see the thumbs up and many reached out to shake my hand. A few even came up to us at lunch and wanted more information and wanted to start a council in their area. Maribeth Stewart was there representing WUCWO and I am grateful for her support and help with the script and for helping to get us on the agenda and for her impetus to get a video that we can show everywhere and I hope you are too! It is available on the NCCW website.

The next meeting is in June in Detroit and NCCW will be represented there too.