



Are We One Nation Under God?

Bishop Edgar da Cunha in his July 16th Weekly Blog, below, asked this during the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage Journey in our Diocese

“One of the highlights of the past week was welcoming the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage to the Diocese of Fall River. As hundreds of the faithful gathered for Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, and public processions through the streets of Easton, New Bedford, and Fall River, we offered a joyful witness to our belief in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist. It was a grace-filled reminder that Christ continues to walk with His people, calling us to deeper faith, renewed hope, and a greater commitment to sharing His love with the world.

“At the Opening Mass of the Pilgrimage at the Father Peyton Center in North Easton, I reflected on what a grace-filled, inspiring, and I prayed for what I hoped to be a transformative

week for the Diocese as we welcomed this historic journey of faith and renewal. As the Pilgrimage traveled through three communities in our Diocese, we were blessed with many opportunities for participation in Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, and processions, all supporting its mission of revival and unity for our Church and our country, rooted in the Eucharist as we celebrate the milestone of our nation’s 250th anniversary.

“Celebrating the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul in the beautiful outdoor grotto on the grounds of the Father Peyton Center, I spoke about how their lives offer a powerful lens through which to understand the Eucharist and this *(Continued on page 2)*

Are We One Nation. . . ?

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Pilgrimage. Both Saints Peter and Paul experienced transformative, life-changing encounters with Jesus. St. Peter being called to help transform the world through Christ's invitation, and St. Paul moving from opposition to becoming one of the Church's greatest missionaries, leading many others to faith.

"In my concluding Mass for the Pilgrimage in the Diocese at the Cathedral, I invited the faithful to reflect honestly on our nation's history and to recommit ourselves to living as 'one nation under God.' While we give thanks for the many blessings of freedom, faith, and religious liberty, I also acknowledged the ways in which we have fallen short of that ideal and urged a renewed turning to the Lord in trust and humility.

"I emphasized that the Eucharist is the source of our gratitude and transformation, reminding us that thanksgiving opens our hearts to conversion and deeper discipleship. As we hear in Scripture, 'We will do everything that the Lord has told us,' I encouraged the faithful to embrace that call through lives marked by gratitude, service, charity, and generosity.

"Reflecting on the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, I reminded everyone that Christ is able to multiply even our smallest gifts when we place them in His hands. I concluded by urging all of us to remember and pass on the gift of the Eucharist to future generations, so that we may continue to live and proclaim with faith that we are truly a people under God, sustained always by His presence and love. +

Bishop da Cunha's blog and The Anchor are available at anchornews.org.

Letter of His Holiness

Pope Leo XIV

**On the 250th Anniversary of the
Founding of the United States of America**

From the Vatican, June 25, 2026

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all Americans on the occasion of the 250th Anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. This semi-quincentennial marks that defining moment in the history of the United States of America, July 4, 1776, that gave enduring voice to the ideals of liberty, equality, the pursuit of happiness, justice and democratic self-government.

For two and a half centuries, generations of Americans have worked together to carry these principles forward — through sacrifice, service, innovation and civic participation. This anniversary stands as an invitation not only to celebrate the nation's remarkable journey, but also to reflect upon the responsibilities that the sons and daughters of this country bear to one another, and to the generations who will inherit the nation that is being shaped today.

Among the most cherished of these principles is religious freedom — the right of every person to worship according to conscience and to practice their faith openly, without coercion or fear. In marking this anniversary, it is important to recognize that freedom of religion has long been central to the American promise, protecting both individual dignity and the peaceful coexistence of a diverse people.

This same freedom has permitted the Catholic Church to take root and flourish within the United States, to the advantage not only of her own members, but of the entire nation. As faithful sons and daughters of the Church, Catholics are called to imbue every dimension of their existence with the charity of Christ (cf. 2 Cor 5:14), living out the Gospel in the ***(Continued on page 3)***

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circumstances of daily life. Such a way of living has given rise to the many benefits that the Church has provided over the years to the development of this nation. In particular, I bring to mind her service in areas of education, the preferential care of the poor, healthcare and basic social services, to name a few.

In the Encyclical *Sapientiae Christianae*, my predecessor Pope Leo XIII wrote that “no better citizen is there... than the Christian who is mindful of his duty” (no. 7). In fact, faith — far from standing in opposition to the responsibilities of citizenship — lends new vigor to the pursuit of justice, peace and the common good, bringing to perfection every natural gift bestowed by the Creator. Saint Paul himself encouraged the early Christians to pray for those in positions of authority in order to live a peaceful life in accord with the will of God (cf. 1 Tim 2:2). In this regard, it is in the faithful fulfilment of duty — to God and country — that Catholics are called to continue to serve the nation, as leaven for the growth of a civilization of love (cf. Mt 13:33).

Also among the principles that have guided the development of this country is the God-given dignity of every human life, each person being endowed with an inherent worth that calls for reverence, protection and care. In this spirit, a full understanding of this dignity leads to recognizing the importance of safeguarding human life from its beginning at conception until natural death, and of building a society in which the vulnerable, the suffering and the

forgotten are always met with compassion, solidarity and love.

Defending human life also includes welcoming, protecting and assisting immigrants, whose hopes, sacrifices and contribution have formed part of the history of this country from its very beginning. In every generation, those who have arrived seeking freedom, opportunity and a place to belong have helped to shape the nation’s character. To receive them with compassion and generosity is not only an act of charity, but also a recognition of the dignity that belongs to every human person.

In my recent Encyclical Letter, *Magnifica Humanitas*, I wrote about working together for the common good. “Building a world in which everyone can flourish requires shared responsibility and courage. No one can single-handedly bear the weight of the challenges the world is facing”. We need one another, and we need to work together in unity to confront the challenges that the world is facing today.

May this milestone renew the shared commitment to the promise of freedom, justice, opportunity and democracy. May Americans honor the courage and vision of those who came before them by strengthening their communities, respecting their differences and working together toward a more perfect union.

Congratulations on this extraordinary national anniversary. May the spirit of 1776 continue to inspire hope and unity as the United States of America moves into the future. In assuring all of you of my prayers in your renewed efforts to strengthen the nation in the principles that guided its Founding Fathers, I entrust you to the intercession of the Immaculate Conception, patroness of this country, that she will continue to watch over America and protect all who dwell therein. +

— LEO PP. XIV

August Is Dedicated to The Immaculate Heart of Mary

*The Church, in inviting us to consecrate ourselves to her
Immaculate Heart, implicitly calls upon us for this reparation*

The month of August is traditionally dedicated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The physical heart of Mary is venerated — and not adored as the Sacred Heart of Jesus is — because it is united to her person and is the seat of her love especially for her divine Son, virtue, and inner life. Such devotion is an incentive to a similar love and virtue for all.

This devotion received new emphasis from the visions given to St. Lucy Dos Santos, oldest of the visionaries of Fatima, in her convent in Tuy, in Spain, in 1925 and 1926.

In these visions, Our Lady asked for the practice of the Five First Saturdays to help make amends for the offenses committed against her heart by the blasphemies and ingratitude of men. The practice parallels the devotion of the Nine First Fridays in honor of the Sacred Heart.

On October 31, 1942, Pope Pius XII made a solemn Act of Consecration of the Church and the whole world to the Immaculate Heart.

Pope Paul VI, at the close of the third session of Vatican II, renewed publicly the consecration of the Church and the world to Mary's Immaculate Heart. He said that his thoughts turned to the whole world "which our venerated predecessor Pius XII . . . not without inspiration from on high, solemnly consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. When Pope Paul visited Fatima on May 13, 1967, he recalled this "consecration which we ourselves have renewed on November 21, 1964 — we exhort all the sons of the Church to renew personally their consecration to the Immaculate Heart of the Mother of the Church and to bring alive this most noble act of veneration through a life ever more in accord with the divine will and in

a spirit of filial service and of devout imitation of their heavenly Queen."

Consecration to the Immaculate Heart

One good way to make the preparation for consecration is in the last part of St. Louis de Montfort's *True Devotion* book. The most essential thing is not making an act of consecration, with or without some solemnity, although that is important, but to live that consecration.

Living a consecration could be described as following three attitudes or spirits:

Union — Imitation of Jesus and Mary, so as to become like them, trying to develop as constant as possible a realization of His and her presence.

Dependence — Give to Jesus and Mary the right to dispose of everything we have, temporal and spiritual.

Obedience — Jesus and Mary have the right to ask us to do anything at all, even without reward. In consecration, we recognize that right, give it on a basis of love, and plan to carry it out with fullest generosity.

St. Maximilian Kolbe spoke of the relation of consecration to our baptismal promises, in which we promised to renounce Satan and all his works, and to follow Jesus, by whom we are "sealed" in Baptism as His property. Consecration is the fullest kind of response to carrying out these promises.

Mary, in view of her Immaculate Conception, was most fitted to respond most fully, which she did, with a fullness and perfection beyond our ability to visualize. Pius IX told us that even at the start of her existence, her holiness was so great that "none greater under God can be thought of, and no one but God can comprehend it." +

What Is the REC Ministry?

REC (Residents Encounter Christ) is a spiritual encounter with and for the residents of the Barnstable County Correctional Facility. A team of volunteers from various Cape Cod parishes, currently led by Rev. Riley Williams, assisted by our own Deacon David Boucher, invite residents to meet Christ in a deeper, personal way through the witness and sharing of the REC team.

This may be the first religious, moral, or spiritual training the residents may have encountered.

REC began in 1993 here when a team from Springfield came to work with Deacons Richard Murphy and Joe Stanley.

There are several ways to participate. One become a member of the REC team. Another is to write notes of encouragement to residents called *palanca*. A third is through financial help which helps pay for the cost of bibles, rosaries and other materials. Donations may be sent to REC, P.O. Box 294, E. Sandwich MA 02537.

REC also asks for prayers for the residents and the ministry.

Father Williams and Deacon Boucher are assisted by a steering committee of REC team members. If you would like more information, please contact Deacon Boucher at 508-737-9041, his email deacondavidboucher@gmail.com. +

St. Alphonse Ligouri in *The School of Christian Perfection*, quotes Jesus when writing about Humility and Meekness: “*Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart.*”

— Matt. 11:29

“Humility is called by the saints the foundation and safeguard of all the virtues. If it is not the most prominent among the virtues, it occupies, according to St. Thomas, the first place as the foundation of the rest. In the erection of a building, the basement comes before the walls and pillars, even though the latter be of gold. And so in the spiritual life humility must precede everything else in order to banish pride, to which God is so opposed. He, therefore, who endeavors to acquire the other virtues without humility, says St. Gregory, is scattering dust before the wind. . . .

“Humble yourself,” says St. Augustine, ‘and God will descend to unite Himself with you; but if you are proud He will depart from you.’ The Royal Prophet had said the same thing long before: God looks upon the humble with loving eyes, but the proud He sees from afar. When the rebel angels grew proud, God drove them from His sight and cast them into the abyss, for God’s Word must be fulfilled: ‘Whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be humbled.’ (Matt. 23:12). . . .

“Humility and meekness were the favorite virtues of Jesus Christ, and He recommended them in a particular manner to His disciples when He said: ‘Learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart.’ (Matt. 11:29). Our Divine Redeemer was called the ‘Lamb of God,’ not only on account of the Sacrifice He was to make of Himself on the Cross in expiation for sin, but also on account of the meekness that characterized His whole life and particularly during His bitter Passion. When He was rudely buffeted by the servant of Caiphas and charged with a want of respect for the high priest, He meekly replied: ‘If I have spoken ill, give testimony thereof; but if well, why strikest thou me?’ (John 18:23). When He hung upon the Cross and His enemies loaded Him with insults and ignominy, He turned to His heavenly Father and said: ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.’” (Luke 23:34). +





***The Prayer of the Christophers Relates
to the Year of St. Francis of Assisi***

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born
to eternal life. Amen.

— *attributed to St. Francis of Assisi*

Perhaps we might wish to add it to our daily prayers during this Jubilee Year and maybe take a look at the Christophers website as well — *christophers.org*.

The fact that Father James Keller, M.M. was able to start The Christophers back in 1945 embodies the promise America offers. His motto: “It’s better to light one candle than to curse the darkness” had great impact on many young people growing up in the 50s

and 60s. The Christophers then and today offer a wide assortment of publications — printed and on the network — to encourage us to be part of this bringing light to the darkness that surrounds us today.

The following was on a bookmark sent out in July. It’s entitled: “It’s up to you. . .”

Read it and think how it might inspire you to become that best version of yourself.

“It’s up to you . . . to discover and fulfill the particular mission in life which Christ assigned to you and to no one else.

“The more you realize how much you are needed, the more initiative, imagination and courage you will show in bringing out the great power God has hidden within you.

“It should thrill you to realize that God wishes you to be His instrument in renewing the face of the earth — and that your efforts will bear fruit from now into eternity.” +

***CRS Receives State Department Funds
For Humanitarian Aid to Cuba***

Catholic Relief Services, the humanitarian and development agency of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, announced July 21 that it had received a \$60 million, part of the \$100 million award from the U.S. Department of State.

The agency said the funding will enable it to partner with Caritas Cuba — which, like CRS, is part of Caritas Internationalis, the Catholic Church’s global humanitarian network — to provide “emergency food and hygiene supplies to nearly 200,000 households, or more than half a million people,” across Cuba.

The award, CRS noted, will allow distribution of “essential household items — including mattresses and blankets — to another 7,000 people who need them.” +

How Papal Prayer Intentions Are Chosen

According to the international director of Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network

Last month, Father Cristóbal Fones, S.J, the international director of the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network, explained in an interview with "EWTN News In Depth" how the Pope's prayer network helps him choose 12 to offer for each month of the year.

The Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network is a pontifical foundation known for its *Pray with the Pope* campaign through which the Holy Father announces his month's intention in a video message.

In order to do so, the network will "help the pope to discern the intentions a year ahead," Fones explained. "So we ask many people — all the dicastaries and our national directors — to give us some proposals." While the pope "has an endless list" of prayer intentions, he chooses 12 to offer for each month of the year. The Holy Father "takes some time to pray on these proposals" and then chooses the 12 intentions for the upcoming year in advance.

"So we published, for instance, the 2027 monthly intentions last February. So you can already know what we are about to pray for next year too, and so that we can have some time to make the translations, to create the materials in Indonesian, Hindi, Swahili, Guarani, and so on."

Pope Leo has continued the tradition of Pope Francis, who recorded the first video of the monthly intentions in 2016, but the current pontiff has put his own take on it.

Pope Leo is "not only asking us to pray but praying himself for the monthly intention and inviting us to join him in prayer," Fones said. "That's why we call this campaign *Pray with the Pope*, because he's the first one interceding for the needs of humanity, and he is inviting us through this campaign to do it with him."

"Some people may watch the video and participate with him by praying. [EWTN carries the video.] Others can do it [on] their own. But the important thing is to be united in this network of hearts — compassionate hearts for the needs of the world."

According to Father Fones, more than 22 million Catholics across the globe are dedicated to praying daily for the challenges facing humanity and the Church through monthly intentions.. The Pope's August intention is "For Evangelization in the City. Let us pray that in large cities often marked by anonymity and loneliness we find new ways to proclaim the Gospel, discovering creative paths to build community." Do check out the August video, at www.thepopevideo.org . +

Prayer for the Holy Father

Almighty and everlasting God, have mercy upon Thy servant, Pope Leo XIV, our Supreme Pontiff, and direct him, according to Thy loving kindness, in the way of eternal salvation; that, of Thy gift, he may ever desire that which is pleasing unto Thee and may accomplish it with all his might. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be to the Father. . .

Words of WISDOM

Quotations from the Saints whose feasts are this month . . .

“Mary, to obtain the life of grace for us . . . offered her beloved Jesus to an ignominious death, and watched Him die before her eyes in cruel and unexampled torments.”

— **St. Alphonse Ligouri**

“Do not try to please everybody, try to please God, the angels, and the saints — they are your public.”

— **St. John Vianney**

“If you want Christ to love you and help you, you must love Him and always make every endeavour to please Him. Do not waver in your purpose because even if all the saints and every single creature were to abandon you, He will always be near you, no matter what your needs may be.”

— **St. Cajetan**

“A man who governs his passions is master of the world. We must either rule them, or be ruled by them. It is better to be the hammer than the anvil.”

— **St. Dominic**

“Learn, unhappy man, how great is the power of my God; for your burning coals give me refreshment but they will be your eternal punishment.”

— **St. Lawrence**

“Never forget that the way which leads to heaven is narrow; that the gate leading to life is narrow and low; that there are but few who find it and enter by it; and if there be some who go in and tread the narrow path for some time, there are but very few who persevere therein.”

— **St. Clare of Assisi**

“We think not enough of this Truth — that God is present with us that He sees our thoughts, even long before we have them. That He knows what we think and shall think, better than we ourselves that He sees the folds and recesses, of our heart and of this other Truth — that nothing happens to us but by the order of Providence. We should all be Saints, if we well apprehended these Truths. And truly, it is a great consolation, to know that God sees the bottom of our heart.”

— **St. Jane Frances de Chantal**

The most deadly poison of our time is indifference. Let us strive, therefore, to praise Him (God) to the greatest extent of our powers.”

— **St. Maximilian Kolbe**

“I ask you to consider, that our Lord Jesus Christ is your true head and that you are a member of His body. He belongs to you as the head belongs to the body. All that is His is yours — breath, heart, body, soul and all His faculties. All of these you must use, as if they belonged to you, so that in serving Him, you may give Him praise, love and glory.”

— **St. John Eudes**

“The three most important virtues are: humility, humility and humility.”

— **St. Bernard**



Words of WISDOM

Quotations on Evangelizing and the Mission of the Church

“It seems to us that two special objectives ought to be aimed at in all missionary work, both of which are not only timely but necessary and closely connected with each other; namely, that a much larger number than heretofore of missionaries, well trained in the different fields of knowledge, be sent into the vast regions which are still deprived of the civilizing influence of the Christian religion; and secondly, that the faithful be brought to understand with what zeal, constancy in prayer, and with what generosity they too must co-operate in a work which is so holy and fruitful. “

— **Pope Pius XI**

“By their zeal in promoting the sacred missionary efforts of the Church, a zeal that generously feeds the fire of Christian charity, men, ever mindful of the gift of faith, may in some way make a return to Almighty God; by so doing and imparting to others according to their ability the gift of the faith that is theirs, they are visibly manifesting their gratitude to the Heavenly Father.”

— **Pope Pius XII**

“What is needed, and what everyone imbued with a truly Christian, Catholic and apostolic spirit craves today, is that this doctrine

shall be more widely known, more deeply understood, and more penetrating in its effects on men’s moral lives.”

— **St. Pope John XXIII**

“The task of evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church. . . .

Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize.”

— **Pope Paul VI**

“The Mission of Christ the Redeemer, which is entrusted to the Church, is still very far from completion. . . . This mission is still only beginning . . . we must commit ourselves wholeheartedly to its service.”

— **St. Pope John Paul II**

“Help each other to live and to grow in the Christian faith so as to be valiant witnesses of the Lord. Be united, but not closed. Be humble, but not fearful. Be simple, but not naive. Be thoughtful, but not complicated. Enter into dialogue with others, but be yourselves.” — **Pope Benedict XVI**

“Proclaiming Christ means showing that to believe in and to follow Him is not only something right and true, but also something beautiful, capable of filling life with new splendor and profound joy, even in the midst of difficulties.”

— **Pope Francis**

“We must seek together how to be a missionary Church, a Church that builds bridges, dialogue, always open to receive, like this [St. Peter’s] square, with open arms. Everyone, everyone who needs our charity, our presence, dialogue and love.”

— **Pope Leo XIV**

The Month of August 2026

Monthly Theme:

The Immaculate Heart of Mary

August is a month of transition from summer vacations back to the grind of school and work. Its dedication to the Immaculate Heart of Mary grew in popularity following Our Lady's appearances in Fatima. Our liturgical year allows us to celebrate the major feasts of Christ and Mary — the Transfiguration, August 6, and the feast of the Assumption, August 15.

Pope's Prayer Intention:

For Evangelization in the City

Let us pray that in large cities often marked by anonymity and loneliness we find new ways to proclaim the Gospel, discovering creative paths to build community.

Monthly Virtue:

Meekness and Humility of Heart

Humility and meekness were outstanding virtues of Jesus Christ, and He recommended them in a particular manner to His disciples when He said: 'Learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart.' (Matt. 11:29)