

Editorial: The bishops displayed the power of the Eucharist during their November meeting

The writing was on the wall before the start of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' general assembly last June. Following the election of President Joe Biden, who became just the second Catholic to hold the nation's highest office, some bishops were loudly calling for the conference to publicly rebuke him and other Catholic politicians who receive Communion while supporting legal abortion. Other bishops, equally as vocal, claimed that a call to deny Communion to pro-abortion Catholics would be a weaponization of the Eucharist.

This public argument set the stage for – and shined a spotlight on – the bishops' virtual meetings in June. Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the conference, addressed the elephant in the room in his speech to begin the spring assembly, saying: "It seems to me that in these times when society is so divided, the Church has a great duty to more fully reflect the unity that God wants for his creation and his people."

But his call for unity largely fell on deaf ears, as more than 40 bishops – from every side of the debate – weighed in on how the conference should proceed regarding a proposed document on the Eucharist and whether it should include a statement on pro-abortion Catholic politicians and their worthiness to receive Communion. Catholic and secular media outlets widely noted this "heated debate."

Fast forward five months to the bishops' most recent assembly,

which was held in Baltimore in mid-November. It was clear from the drastically different tone and tenor that the bishops did not want a repeat of the public display of division from the spring. Thankfully, for the sake of the Church, they had a plan in place to calm their hearts and quiet their personal feelings.

Before and during the assembly, the bishops – gathered in person for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic began – spent time together before the Blessed Sacrament in the special Eucharistic adoration chapel in the hotel where the assembly took place.

Time spent in adoration certainly didn't dissolve all of the very strong differences of opinions that the bishops likely still hold, but it's difficult to believe that humbly kneeling together before the Eucharistic Lord didn't play a major role in centering the bishops' minds and hearts on their unified mission as the successors of the apostles of Christ.

In a culture – and in a Church – that continues to be divided so sharply along various political and ideological lines, the bishops have offered a model of how we can come together, united in Christ, to move forward in a spirit of humility, fraternity and charity.

This is the power of the great gift of the Eucharist – to soften hearts, to heal divisions and to remind the world of God's love and mercy.

This is why the bishops, after a summer of discussion and collaboration, overwhelmingly approved not only the draft of their document, entitled "The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church," but also plans for the [three-year National Eucharistic Revival](#), which will culminate with the National Eucharistic Congress that will be held in Indianapolis in the summer of 2024.

This is also why Our Sunday Visitor is so strongly supporting

these national initiatives. Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens, auxiliary of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, and bishop-designate of Crookston, Minnesota, announced during a presentation to his fellow bishops that [OSV has pledged \\$1 million](#) to help fund the revival, as well as additional catechetical resources to help foster a deeper understanding of – and devotion to – the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

The unity the bishops showed in Baltimore – a desperately needed display of solidarity – is but one example of the countless benefits of Eucharistic adoration. This Advent, we encourage everyone to spend time with Christ, to bring him your worries and fears, your joys and blessings, and also your intentions to heal the divisions in your own life. “For nothing will be impossible for God” (Lk 1:37).

Consider also the words of Pope St. John Paul II, who wrote: “Closeness to Christ in silence and contemplation does not distance us from our contemporaries but, on the contrary, makes us attentive and open to human joy and distress and broadens our heart on a global scale. It unites us with our brothers and sisters in humanity. ... Through adoration, the Christian mysteriously contributes to the radical transformation of the world and to the sowing of the Gospel. Anyone who prays to the Savior draws the whole world with him and raises it to God.” Amen.

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