

# MOVING FORWARD – USCCB SPRING PLENARY ASSEMBLY

BY BISHOP STEPHEN BERG



Greetings in Our Lord! Following the Spring Plenary Assembly of the USCCB last week, questions have been raised about a vote taken by the bishops to draft a document on the Eucharist.

This document on the Eucharist was proposed five years ago as part of the framework of the 2021-2024 USCCB Strategic Plan, *Created Anew by the Body and Blood of Christ, Source of Our Healing and Hope*. I was a member of the Committee on Priorities and Plans which assisted in its development and final approval. *Created Anew* is a response to the reality in the Church of declining Mass attendance, religious disaffiliation among Catholics, and the lack of understanding of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

The purpose of *Created Anew* is to focus the national Church on the Eucharist and reignite the faith. Next July 2022, all dioceses across the country will begin a three-year period of catechesis, conversion, and evangelization around the Eucharist. The Eucharist Revival Project will involve national, diocesan and parish events, and provide resources beyond any individual dioceses' capacity to undertake such a project alone. It is the next step for our Church to incorporate our mission into the future around the Eucharist.

I ask you to reflect on what this means in your own life and faith. The Eucharist is the gift from God of his son, Jesus, in his body, blood and truth, entering every moment of our lives. It is neither merely a symbol nor a gesture, it is a physical and spiritual relationship, a reality of God alone, closer to us than we are to ourselves. It is our

personal encounter with Christ. This reality must cause much prayer, reflection, and conversion in our daily lives. None of us are worthy for this, and all of us need constant conversion.

“Questions and Answers on the U.S. Bishops’ Vote to Draft a Document on the Meaning of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church” is now available on the USCCB website at [\*\*Q&A on Eucharist Document.pdf \(usccb.org\)\*\*](#). From this FAQ sheet you will see that there has been no vote taken by the bishops whether or not to deny certain groups or individuals the Eucharist, nor any intent to produce a national policy aimed exclusively towards any group or individuals, e.g. politicians. The document will include a section on the Church’s teaching on the responsibility of *every* Catholic, including bishops, to live in accordance with the truth, goodness, and beauty of the Eucharist we celebrate. We will continue to emphasize the obligation of all Catholics to support the dignity of human life, from natural conception to natural death and other fundamental principles of Catholic moral and social teaching.

The Eucharistic Renewal Project has been in planning for five years. Regardless of others’ attempts to reassign its motivation into the political arena, we will be focused on deepening our understanding of and love for the Eucharist. It is time for this renewal, and I am happily anticipating the work ahead. The Holy Spirit will guide our Church through this next important phase as always when we turn to Him as we have done. Let us pray and prepare now to deepen our personal encounter with Christ!

Sincerely in Christ,

**Bishop Stephen Berg**

