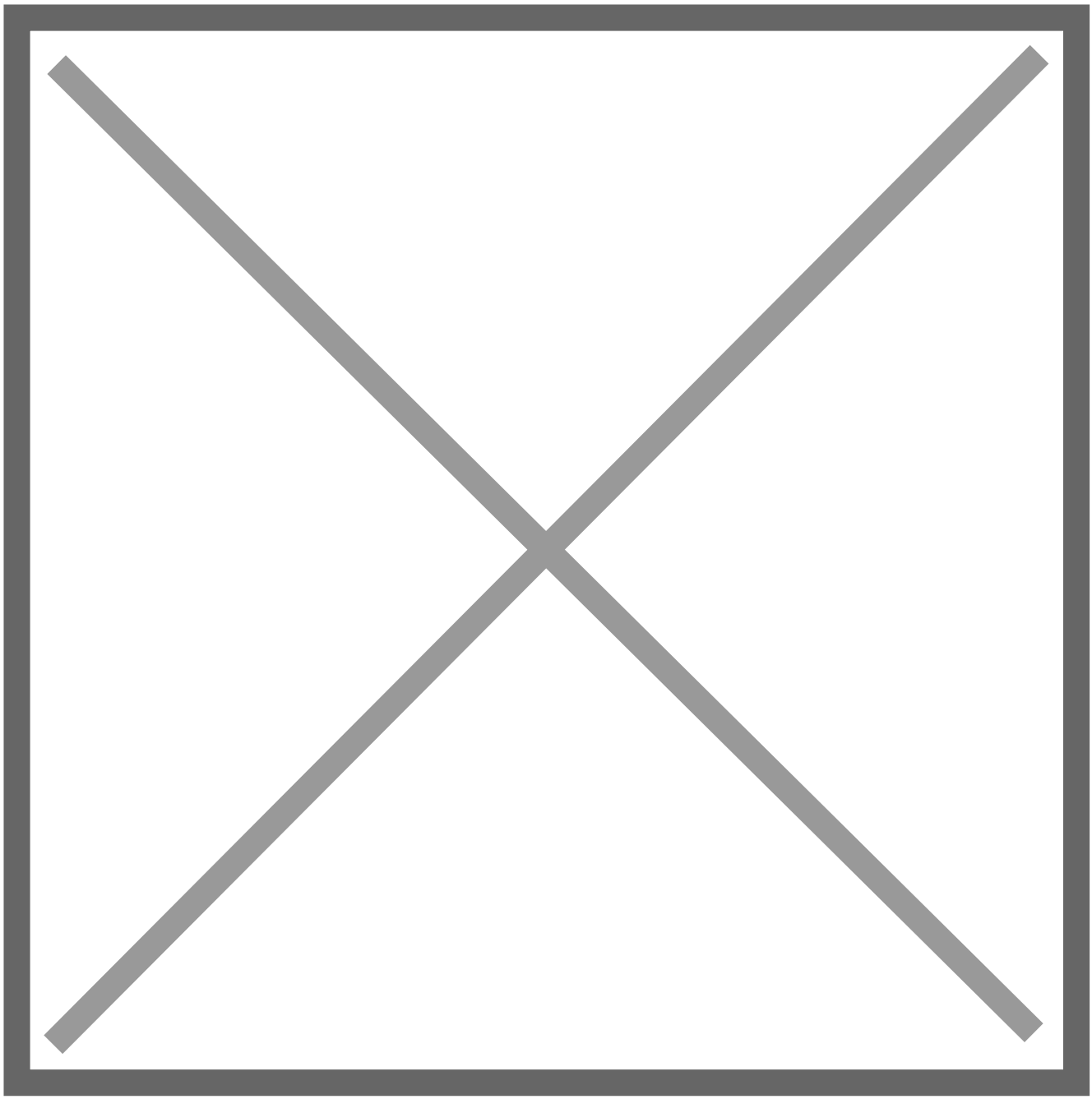
News



Cardinal Juan de la Carida of Havana, Archbishop Paul Gallagher and Archbishop Antoine Camilleri, apostolic nuncio, speak June 6, 2025, in St. Catherine Church in Havana. Gallagher, Vatican secretary for relations with states, visited Havana to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the Holy See. (OSV News/Courtesy of Cuba's bishops' conference)

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HAVANA, CUBA — June 19, 2025
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The bishops of Cuba said the island nation's economic situation and its people's dire circumstances can no longer be ignored and must be addressed by its leaders.

In an unusually blunt statement published June 15, the Cuban bishops' conference said that throughout the country, "it is continuously heard that things are not well, that we cannot continue like this, that something must be done to save Cuba and restore hope to us."

"It is time to create a climate, without internal and external pressures or conditions, where the structural, social, economic, and political changes that Cuba needs can be carried out," the bishops said.

Cuba's economic woes have worsened over the past few years, including inflation, rising poverty, low quality of life and a dilapidated electric grid that causes frequent blackouts. According to a report by the University of Navarra, one expert classified that Cuba is experiencing its "worst crisis since it gained independence from Spain after the war of 1898."

In its Jubilee Year message, titled "Pilgrims of Hope," the Cuban bishops' conference acknowledged that inequalities and injustices in the world make the prospect of hope challenging, particularly in Cuba.

"Even among us, many live in despair, trapped by uncertainty and confusion in the face of a dramatic present and a future that is not clearly seen, because there is an impression that we have lost the levers, the dynamism, and the will to change the very harsh living conditions of the people," the bishops said.

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The lack of basic necessities and electricity, as well as increasing emigration, has provoked "disenchantment and apathy" among the people who are "overwhelmed by the repetition of promises that never materialize."

While the church's proclamation of Christ's resurrection spurs joyful hope, "it is also desirable, legitimate, and worthy of human beings, that every human being can live and work in peace, realize their personal and family dreams, and progress integrally more and more," the message read.

The bishops emphasized the need to revitalize hope among Cubans, which can spur a collective drive "to serve the common good of the homeland." The conference also called for decisive action and structural changes, particularly from those in positions of responsibility, to address the nation's challenges and restore hope to Cuba.

"This demand is an invitation to all, but fundamentally to those who have higher responsibilities when making decisions for the good of the nation," the bishops said.

The message comes a little over a week after Archbishop Paul Gallagher, Vatican secretary for relations with states, visited Havana to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the Holy See.

During his visit, Gallagher met with priests, as well as religious and lay men and women involved in the church's charitable efforts. At the start of the meeting, Archbishop Antoine Camilleri, apostolic nuncio to Cuba, read a message conveying Pope Leo XIV's greeting.

Camilleri noted that the church is "well aware of life's difficulties and also knows that pain is tested when hope seems to crumble in the face of suffering."

He added that those engaged in the Catholic Church's charitable mission "should feel very comforted, because more than an honor, it's a responsibility to be

instruments of God, to replicate his love through your actions and initiatives."