News



Standing at the altar from left, Cardinal Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States; Archbishop Timothy Broglio of the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services; and Baltimore Archbishop William Lori concelebrate Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Baltimore Nov. 10, 2025, to open the fall plenary assembly of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. (OSV News/Catholic Review/Kevin J. Parks)

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Baltimore — November 11, 2025

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Arriving by motor coaches, more than 320 bishops from across the United States streamed into the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Baltimore Nov. 10, where they donned matching vestments to celebrate Mass on the first day of their annual fall plenary assembly.

"A very, very warm welcome to everyone this morning," Baltimore Archbishop William Lori, vice president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said in his opening remarks. "This is a beautiful church, an ancient church. It is a historic church, but I think the most beautiful thing about this church is that it is a living, breathing community of mostly young adults who love the Lord."

In his homily, Archbishop Timothy Broglio, conference president and archbishop of the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services, noted that at the beginning of their sessions, the bishops "beg the Holy Spirit to inspire" their deliberations and "renew their duty to be servants of truth."

He spoke of the many distractions people face in the world today. He told of meeting a young airman at Fort Meade, the U.S. military base in Maryland, who asked him "how to be a saint" and where he could find the courage to live by his convictions of faith.

"I confess that I was moved by the sincerity of his question," Broglio said. "For me, it was a moment of hope. A young man ... seeking ways to deepen his grasp on truth."

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The way forward tends to be self indulgent, he said. The Gospel, he said, "does urge us to be demanding of ourselves" but asks us to "be eager to forgive the other when he or she asks for forgiveness. Help us listen."

The priority in the house of prayer is the worship of God, he said, and "not the motivation of other gods."

During the assembly, which runs through Nov. 13, the bishops are expected to talk about numerous issues, hold elections and discuss policies. Several bishops spoke with Catholic Review, the news outlet for the Baltimore Archdiocese, about the days ahead for the bishops' conference.

Auxiliary Bishop James Massa of the Diocese of Brooklyn, New York, noted that the first day of the conference was a time for reflection with Mass as well as confessions and adoration scheduled to allow the bishops to quiet their own struggles in order to be open and willing.

"Immigration is top on the agenda," Massa said. "It is a time of transition. We are electing a new president and vice president. We need the grace of the Holy Spirit."

"The meeting in Baltimore each year is a very important one," added Bishop Robert Pipta of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Parma, Ohio. "The Eastern Catholic bishops are very much a part of this. We learn. We pray for one another. We really try to face some of the very real challenges in our country right now when it comes to not only our people, but all people of goodwill."

"When you see the church in diversity and unity, and Christ is proclaimed East and West, it's beautiful," Bishop Gregory Mansour of the Eparchy of St. Maron of Brooklyn, said.

For Bishop Bruce Lewandowski of the Diocese of Providence, Rhode Island, the conference was a homecoming as the Redemptorist was previously an auxiliary bishop of Baltimore until his appointment to Providence in May 2025.

"The thing I'm looking forward to most about the conference this time around is being in Baltimore and seeing the people I love," he said, between hugs and well wishes.

This story appears in the **USCCB Fall Assembly 2025** feature series. View the full series.