News



Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and U.S. President Donald Trump, are pictured in a combination photo. Coakley met with Trump at the White House in Washington Jan. 12, 2026. (OSV News/Bob Roller; Reuters/Craig Hudson)



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Oklahoma City Archbishop Paul Coakley, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, met Monday Jan. 12 with President Donald Trump, Vice President JD Vance and other administration officials at the White House.

Coakley and the Trump administration officials discussed "areas of mutual concern, as well as areas for further dialogue," said Chieko Noguchi, a spokeswoman for the bishops' conference.

"Archbishop Coakley is grateful for the engagement and looks forward to ongoing discussions," Noguchi said in a brief statement, emailed to National Catholic Reporter, that did not elaborate on what Coakley and administration officials discussed.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt told reporters that afternoon that the White House would consider providing a readout of Trump's meeting with Coakley, which was closed to the press. The readout had not been provided as of Tuesday morning, Jan. 13.

Although the meeting was listed on the White House schedule, the topics of discussion were not specified.

The meeting took place as the U.S. bishops in recent weeks have criticized the Trump administration's policies on immigration enforcement while praising its stances on topics like gender policy.

Coakley was elected president of the bishops' conference at the fall plenary assembly in November. At the same meeting, the bishops approved a "special pastoral message" that expressed their solidarity with immigrants amid the Trump administration's crackdown on immigration enforcement.

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In the message, the bishops said they opposed "the indiscriminate mass deportation of people" while praying " for an end to dehumanizing rhetoric and violence, whether directed at immigrants or at law enforcement."

Coakley, in a video released during the plenary, described immigration as a "difficult and neuralgic topic," but said that the bishops had spent much time talking about the issue and would continue to discuss and respond to it.

More recently, the bishops conference affirmed "the importance of the Hyde Amendment," which prohibits federal funding for abortions, after Trump had told House Republicans to be "flexible" on the measure during negotiations on health care subsidies with Democrats.

The Trump administration and the bishops' conference have had other moments of tension over the past year. In January 2025, Vance accused the bishops of helping "resettle illegal immigrants" and suggested that they were "worried about their bottom line" in what appeared to be a reference to the conference receiving federal funding for its work resettling.

And last spring, the bishops' conference said it was ending its partnership with the federal government to resettle refugees after the Trump administration had suspended the program in an effort to enforce its immigration policies.

The Coakley-Trump meeting was not unusual in that meetings between U.S. presidents and leaders of the U.S. bishops conference have occurred in recent years.

OSV News reports that in 2017, Trump met with Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, who was then president of the conference. But the conference's previous president, Archbishop Timothy Broglio of the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services, said last November that he had not met with Trump or former President Joseph Biden.

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