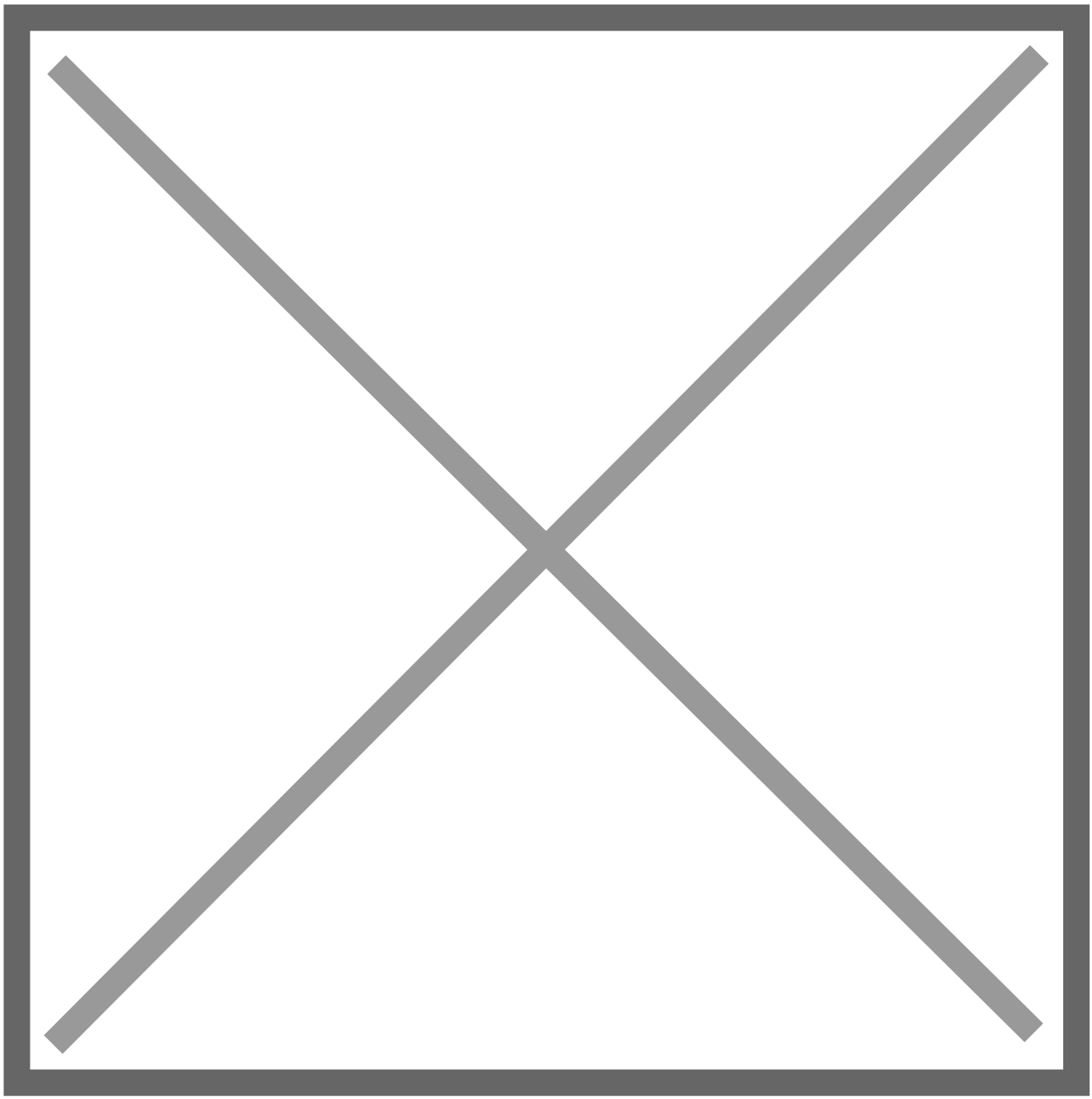
News



People pray during a Mass on June 28, 2026, for the feast day of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, the patroness of Haiti, at Our Lady of Sorrows Church in Takoma Park, Md. It was celebrated for the Haitian Catholic community of Washington three days after Supreme Court ruled June 25 that the Trump administration can end a program temporarily shielding eligible Haitian and Syrian immigrants living in the U.S. from deportation. (OSV News/Catholic Standard/Mihoko Owada)

Mark Zimmermann

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TAKOMA PARK, Md. — July 2, 2026
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As Haitian Catholics often do in challenging times and in everyday life, they turned to Mary following the Supreme Court's June 25 ruling that the Trump administration can end a program temporarily shielding eligible Haitian and Syrian immigrants living in the U.S. from deportation.

Three days after the ruling on Temporary Protected Status, the Haitian Catholic Community of the Archdiocese of Washington gathered at a Mass for the feast of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, the patroness of Haiti. Hundreds of people attended the Mass celebrated in French and Creole at Our Lady of Sorrows Church in Takoma Park.

The main celebrant was Bishop Pierre-André Dumas of Anse-à-Veau-Miragoâne, Haiti, an outspoken critic of the violence and instability in his country, who survived a 2024 explosion near Port-au-Prince that left him with third-degree burns over more than 40% of his body.

The Mass on June 28, a day after the feast day, opened with the hundreds of people joyfully singing "Ave, Ave Maria." The opening procession was led by a man carrying the flag of Haiti followed by four men reverently carrying a platform bearing an icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

Moments later, Dumas blessed the icon with incense.

The 10 concelebrating priests included Fr. Father Luc Philogene, chaplain of the Haitian Catholic Community of Washington since 2018; Fr. Angel Fermin, the pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows; and Capuchin Franciscan Fr. Anthony Baetzold, the new pastor of the Shrine of the Sacred Heart in Washington.

During the singing of the Gloria in French, girls and young women performed an expressive liturgical dance.

After Dumas gave his homily, the young women led the offertory procession, carrying the flag of Haiti and baskets with fruits and vegetables grown in the island, including pineapples, mangoes and avocados.

The bishop has become "a living witness to God's love and mercy; what he has lived through has made him a living martyr," Philogene said in an interview with the Catholic Standard, Washington's archdiocesan news outlet.

Dumas in his homily "emphasized trust as the key to living in the present moment," the priest said. "In his message, he reminded us that we must live with gratitude for the past, for all the miracles that Mother Mary has worked for Haiti; he also invites us to ask the Virgin Mary for strength and courage to live in the present moment here in the U.S. and in Haiti, and to have hope that the Lord, through the intercession of Mary our Mother, will do something for us."

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Haitian Catholics attend parishes across the Archdiocese of Washington, and Philogene celebrates weekend Masses for about 400 families in Maryland at St. Camillus Church in Silver Spring, Our Lady of Sorrows Church and the Shrine of the Sacred Heart.

The priest emphasized that "one thing to know about the Haitian people is their faith. Haitians do not lose their faith and hope in difficult times. Haitians hope that the Lord will do something. Haitians rely heavily on providence. … Haitians always believe that God will provide."

The court's TPS ruling could cause an estimated 350,000 Haitian immigrants who have lived and worked in the United States to face deportation to Haiti, which has been wracked by gang violence and political instability in recent years.

Philogene, in a June 29 email interview with the Catholic Standard, said several hundred Haitian families in the Washington metropolitan area are enrolled in the TPS program, including many in the Catholic community.

"Since 2010, the situation in Haiti has continued to deteriorate. With the current sociopolitical situation, things are getting worse. People have lost their homes, their jobs and their businesses," he said, adding that some of the Haitian TPS participants have been in the United States for 15 years.

"They've worked hard to fit into the system. They have their families, their homes, and their careers," he told the Catholic Standard. "They have a home, a car, and they're raising their children. They do the jobs they wouldn't have done in their own countries — jobs that perhaps the native-born people of this country don't want to do. They're in every sector, helping out, working, and earning a living."

Philogene said that if the TPS protections are removed for those immigrants, they will no longer have work permits.

He also noted that because of the current immigration situation, more than 20 members of the choir didn't come to sing at the June 28 Mass, and "some parishioners haven't been coming to Mass because they're afraid."

In an interview at a reception following Mass, Bishop Dumas said that in his homily he told the people that Haitians should bring all their "sufferings, hopes and expectations" to Mary. He noted how when Jesus was on the cross, he told St. John, "Behold your mother."

"It's not only for John, it's for us," the bishop said.

He said he encouraged them to have trust like Mary did. "Mary can intercede for us. God has trust in her, because Mary said ‘yes.'"

"I explained Mary is the mother of trust," Bishop Dumas said, adding that he pointed out that in America, people's money has the phrase "In God We Trust," and people should have that phrase "not only in your money, but in your heart."

He also noted the phrase that is central to the Divine Mercy devotion: "Jesus I trust in you."

Dumas said he closed his homily with a prayer to Our Lady of Perpetual Help, to Mary "who teaches us how to live with trust. She is the one who lives and gives trust to God."

In the interview, the bishop also said, "Haitian people, they have a lot of faith. … God is someone very close to them."

Also at the reception were Jean Varneld Paul and his wife, Sabine Paul, who are members of Resurrection Parish in Burtonsville, Maryland. They, too, reflected on the challenges being faced by Haitian immigrants in the TPS program.

"We're looking for a miracle at this point. We're looking for her (Mary's) help," said Jean Varneld Paul, a software engineer originally from Haiti who became a U.S. citizen in 1990. He added, "I've been here for 40 years. I still feel for my brothers and sisters. … I've been here. I'm still Haitian. My heart goes to Haiti."

This story appears in the **Immigration and the Church** feature series. View the full series.