

Pope Francis has 'added new life' to office he holds, U.S. bishops say

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In his first year as the 265th successor of Peter, Pope Francis "has brought to light new dimensions of the Petrine ministry and added new life to the office he holds," the U.S. bishops' Administrative Committee said Tuesday.

He has done this in many ways, the committee said, including by consistently calling on Catholics "to look again at the fundamental values of the Gospel" and encouraging "us to be a church of the poor and for the poor, reaching out to the marginalized and being present to those on the periphery of society."

The Administrative Committee is the highest ranking body of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops when the bishops are not in their plenary session. During a meeting Tuesday and Wednesday in Washington, the committee issued the statement to congratulate the pope on his first anniversary.

Pope Francis "has set an example by choosing a personal simplicity of life, by washing the feet of prisoners, and by taking into his hands and kissing the badly disfigured," the committee said. "His Holiness has also set in motion a process that will lead to the reshaping of the Roman Curia in a way that will enhance the effectiveness of his ministry and better serve the needs of the church in our present day."

The Administrative Committee also noted the impact that Pope Francis' leadership and simple lifestyle have had on the world.

"His constant outreach to the alienated, his emphasis on mercy and his sheer humanity have served as an inspiration not only to Catholics but also to other Christians and people of good will around the globe," the statement said.

"On this first anniversary of his election, the Administrative Committee invites the prayers of all the faithful that Christ our Lord will bless Pope Francis and grant him many years of fruitful ministry as bishop of Rome, as the servant of the servants of God," it added.

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