

**GREETINGS BY HIS EXCELLENCY ARCHBISHOP CHRISTOPHE PIERRE  
APOSTOLIC NUNCIO TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
FOURTH AFRICAN NATIONAL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS  
THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA, WASHINGTON, D.C.  
JULY 22, 2023**

To Cardinal Wilton Gregory, my brother Bishops, dear priests, deacons, religious, and members of the lay faithful: Good morning! As the Holy Father's personal representative to the United States, it is my honor to convey to all of you the spiritual closeness and solidarity of Pope Francis. I am grateful to the members of the Leadership Team for inviting me to be present with you for this Congress.

For all African Catholics in the United States, this is an opportunity to come together to celebrate your common African heritage, your shared Catholic faith, and your call to be missionary disciples in these United States, centered around Eucharistic worship and enlivened by the incarnational presence of Jesus Christ in our midst. He is with us! Amen?

It is so good for you to be here. A rich Catholic history continues to be written in Africa, from the arrival of the Gospel in north Africa in the first Christian century, to the spread of Catholicism throughout many of the nations in recent centuries, down to the present day. Your presence in the United States has now become an important part of this country's Catholic history. We are grateful for the gifts that African Catholics bring to this country: the dedicated service of African clergy and religious; your vibrant expressions of worship and spirituality; and your joyful hope. All of this begins from your openness to the Holy Spirit. The Church in the United States is enriched and evangelized by your faith. Thank you!

In my years of service to the Holy See's diplomatic mission, one of my joys has been the opportunity to serve in some of the African nations: first in Mozambique and Zimbabwe, and then as Nuncio in Uganda from 1999 until 2007. For me, this was a wonderful immersion in the culture and faith of Africa.

In line with the theme of this year's Congress – *A Response to the Lord's Prayer: "That They May All Be One"* – let us remember what Pope Francis said on the eve of his journey to Kenya and Uganda in 2015:

"We are living at a time when religious believers, and persons of good will everywhere, are called to foster mutual understanding and respect, and to support each other as members of our one human family. For all of us are God's children."<sup>1</sup>

My dear brothers and sisters, thank you for being here. Thank you for listening to the Spirit and for believing in Christ present in our midst. And thank you for your commitment to building the unity that Jesus desires for all of his people. Enjoy these days, and my God bless you!

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<sup>1</sup> Pope Francis, Video Message at the Vigil of the Apostolic Journey to Kenya and Uganda, November 25-30, 2015.