

## MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Parishioners,

On January 28, Archbishop Paul S. Coakley, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, issued a statement calling for a Holy Hour for Peace for the renewal of our hearts and our nation. The Diocese of Columbus observed a Holy Hour for Peace in response to this invitation at St. Joseph Cathedral this past Sunday, February 1, led by Bishop Fernandes.

Numerous parishioners have spoken with me in recent days and have expressed their concerns and alarm about the state of our country and their powerlessness to change the reality for the better. It was in this context that I received and read Archbishop Coakley's message, and I found it very meaningful. Therefore, I want to share this message with all of you in its entirety:

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*Many people today feel powerless in the face of violence, injustice, and social unrest. To those who feel this way, I wish to say clearly: Your faithfulness matters. Your prayers matter. Your acts of love and works of justice matter.*

*I am deeply grateful for the countless ways Catholics and all people of good will continue to serve one another and work for peace and justice. Whether feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, caring for the sick, accompanying the lonely, visiting the imprisoned, or striving daily to love their neighbors, no work of mercy or act of justice is ever wasted in the eyes of God. While proper laws must be respected, works of mercy, peacefully assembling, and caring for those in your community are signs of hope, and they build peace more surely than anger or despair ever could. Christ reminds us that even 'a single cup of cold water' given in his name will not go unrewarded (cf. Mt 10:42).*

*The recent killing of two people by immigration enforcement officers in Minneapolis and that of a detained man in Texas, are just a few of the tragic examples of the violence that represent failures in our society to respect the dignity of every human life. We mourn this loss of life and deplore the indifference and injustice it represents. The current climate of fear and polarization, which thrives when human dignity is disregarded, does not meet the standard set by Christ in the Gospel.*

*As a step toward healing, I invite my brother bishops and priests across the United States to offer a Holy Hour for Peace in the days ahead. Let us pray for reconciliation where there is division, for justice where there are violations of fundamental rights, and for consolation for all who feel overwhelmed by fear or loss. I encourage Catholics everywhere to participate, whether in parishes, chapels, or before the Lord present in the quiet of their hearts for healing in our nation and communities.*

*May this Holy Hour be a moment of renewal for our hearts and for our nation. Entrusting our fears and hopes to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, let us ask the Lord to make us instruments of his peace and witnesses to the inherent dignity of every person.*

*Let us pray together, confident that God hears the cry of his people and remains close to all who seek him.”*

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**In response to Archbishop Coakley's invitation, we will hold a Holy Hour for Peace this coming Monday, February 9, from 3:30-4:30 p.m. in the Church.** Last Sunday in my homily, I spoke about the shortage of peacemakers in our country at present, and I urged those who heard my voice to follow Jesus' call to be peacemakers by working for justice. What better way to build peace than by offering our fervent prayer for peace to the Prince of Peace. I hope that many of you will participate in this Holy Hour and be strengthened and consoled by our solidarity with Christ and one another.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.”

Your Pastor,

Monsignor Stephan Moloney