

My Dear friends in Christ,

Although the 16th National Catholic Prayer Breakfast could not be held in-person in Washington, D.C., I was pleased to learn through Mark Randall that a virtual event would be held this year, and I wish to welcome all those joining this online event.

As the Apostolic Nuncio, the personal representative of the Holy Father, I wish to express the heartfelt greetings and spiritual closeness of Pope Francis as you “connect” with each other and the Lord, not only through the power of modern media, but through the power of the Holy Spirit who unites us in prayer and strengthens the bonds of spiritual communion that exist among Catholics.

The Holy Father unites himself with you in prayer, wishing to convey his particular closeness to the people of the United States, not only fondly recalling his pastoral visit there five years ago, but also knowing the difficulties the nation is facing in the midst of civil unrest, racial tension, political polarization, and the COVID-19 pandemic. It is certainly hoped that pausing for prayer and invoking the Divine Mercy of God will lead to healing, reconciliation, and spiritual renewal.

As you gather virtually for the National Catholic Prayer Breakfast, it is important to recall the power of prayer. In his reflections on the Lord’s Prayer at his Wednesday audiences last year, Pope Francis said:

Prayer always transforms reality, always. If things around us do not change, at least we change; our heart changes. Jesus promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to each man and to each woman who prays.

We can be certain that God will respond. The only uncertainty is due to time, but let us not doubt that he will respond. Perhaps we will have to persist for our whole life, but he will respond. He promised us this...

There is nothing more certain: the desire for happiness which we all carry in our heart will one day be fulfilled. ... Prayer transforms reality; let us not forget this. It either changes things or changes our heart, but it always transforms. Henceforth, praying is victory over solitude and desperation. (POPE FRANCIS, WEDNESDAY AUDIENCE, 9 JANUARY 2019)

Knowing the reality which we face, including the solitude and desperation faced by so many during this time of pandemic, and trusting in Divine Providence, I encourage all of you to enter deeply into prayer, beseeching the Eternal Father for an outpouring of grace that will lead to happiness and victory over the challenges of these times, according to His will and His Plan.

Commending all those joining this Virtual National Catholic Prayer Breakfast to the protection of Mary, the Mother of the Church, His Holiness cordially imparts his Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of joy and peace in Christ Jesus.

Please know that I too will be united with you in prayer. May God bless you all.