

MESSAGE OF THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF CUBA TO ALL CUBANS OF GOOD WILL

Dear brothers and sisters,

- 1.** On June 15, we addressed a Message to the Catholic faithful on the occasion of the Jubilee Year which, under the motto “Pilgrims of Hope,” we were celebrating with the whole universal Church. There, in continuity with what has been a constant of our episcopal Magisterium for decades, we once again referred to the issues that affect the life of the Cuban people:

“The painful and pressing reality we are experiencing does not allow us to remain solely in analysis, in describing the problems and their many causes. It demands that we change the course of this situation. Throughout the entire national territory, for ears attentive and respectful of the suffering of others, one continually hears that things are not going well, that we cannot continue like this, that something must be done to save Cuba and restore hope to us. This appeal is addressed to everyone, but especially to those who bear greater responsibility when it comes to making decisions for the good of the nation. It is time to create a climate, free of internal and external pressures or conditions, in which the structural, social, economic, and political changes that Cuba needs can be carried out.”

- 2.** At that time, we imagined that things could not get any worse and that paths would therefore open which would gradually improve the lives of all who live in this land, while fostering a climate of respect so that all persons, despite diverse opinions yet desirous of contributing to the integral development of the nation, might do so in the areas where change is needed. Sadly, the situation has worsened, and anguish and hopelessness have deepened. Recent news, announcing among other things the elimination of any possibility of oil entering the country, sets off alarm bells, especially for the most vulnerable. The risk of social chaos and violence among the children of the same people is real. No Cuban of good will would rejoice in such a development.

- 3.** Cuba needs change, and the need is increasingly urgent, but it does not need more anguish or more suffering. No more bloodshed and no more mourning in Cuban families. We have already endured too much in our recent history. We desire and long for a renewed, prosperous, and happy Cuba, without increasing the suffering of the poor, the elderly, the sick, and Cuban children.

Saint John Paul II stated at his farewell to Cuba on January 25, 1998:

“The Cuban people cannot be deprived of ties with other peoples, which are necessary for economic, social, and cultural development, especially when the resulting isolation indiscriminately affects the population, increasing the difficulties of the weakest in basic areas such as food, health care, and education.”

For this reason, we were heartened by the recent solidarity shown to our brothers and sisters affected by Hurricane Melissa last October. May our gratitude reach the faithful of all our dioceses, relatives, friends from other countries, Caritas organizations, governments, and international institutions who looked with love and compassion upon those affected and committed themselves to alleviating so much hardship.

4. In that memorable address, already cited and whose relevance remains striking, the Polish Pope called for commitment to “overcome the anguish caused by material and moral poverty, whose causes may include, among others, unjust inequalities, limitations of fundamental freedoms, the depersonalization and discouragement of individuals, and restrictive economic measures imposed from outside the country, unjust and ethically unacceptable.”

5. The consistent position of the Pope and of the Holy See, in accordance with international law, is that governments should resolve their disagreements and conflicts through dialogue and diplomacy, not through coercion or war. For when people speak, they come to understand one another. Whenever good will exists, it is always possible to find ways to resolve conflicts and to seek the triumph of truth and goodness, of justice, love, and freedom.

6. At the same time, respect for the dignity and the exercise of freedom of every human being within the nation cannot be subordinated or conditioned by the variables of external conflicts. History has repeatedly shown that a climate of healthy pluralism and mutual respect within a country contributes significantly to easing tensions and fostering fruitful exchange at the international level.

7. Paraphrasing Saint John Paul II, “may the world open itself to Cuba,” but may Cuba also open itself to its own people, to all Cubans, without exclusions or strategies that seek to benefit only some. This requires placing the good of Cuba above partisan interests. It calls for greatness of spirit, in the manner of José Martí, when he dreamed and worked so that the homeland might be “With all and for the good of all.”

8. The Catholic Church in Cuba will continue to accompany this people whom we love, in the manner proper to the mission entrusted to her by the Lord. She will continue praying for all,

celebrating the faith, proclaiming the Gospel, and serving the poor, the sick, families, and prisoners. She will continue to call for conversion and for the living out of fraternal love, justice, and peace. She also offers her readiness, should it be requested, to help lower the tone of hostilities between parties and to create spaces of fruitful collaboration ordered toward the common good.

9. With the Holy Father Leo XIV, echoing his words at the Mass inaugurating his Pontificate, we would like this to be true for Cuba as well:

“This is the hour of love. God’s charity, which makes us brothers and sisters, is the heart of the Gospel. With my predecessor Leo XIII, we can ask today: if this charity were to prevail in the world, would not every struggle quickly come to an end wherever it took effect in civil society?” Encyclical Letter *Rerum novarum*, 20.

10. We confidently invoke the Virgin of Charity, Mother of the Cuban people. Through her intercession, may the “hour of Love” come for us. May wisdom and sound judgment prevail over threats, discord, and positions that seem irreconcilable. So that all the sons and daughters of this land may live here in peace, with dignity and happiness. We pray that God may bless Cuba.

The Catholic Bishops of Cuba
Havana, January 31, 2026
Memorial of Saint John Bosco

NOTE: Please have this read to the faithful at Masses this weekend.

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