



## *United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*

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# Memorandum

**To:** Diocesan Cultural Diversity, Ethnic Ministry and People on the Move Directors  
Diocesan Communications Directors  
Diocesan Pro-Life Directors  
Diocesan Directors of Child and Youth Protection  
Diocesan Safe Environment / Victim Assistance Coordinators  
Diocesan Marriage and Family Life Directors and NFP Coordinators  
Diocesan Youth and/or Young Adult Ministry Directors  
Diocesan Social Justice Directors  
Directors of Catholic Charities with Resettlement Programs  
Diocesan Directors of Evangelization and Catechesis  
Diocesan Superintendents of Schools  
Diocesan Secretaries of Education  
Diocesan Vocations Directors  
Diocesan Directors of Liturgy and Divine Worship  
Diocesan Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs Officers  
State Catholic Conference Directors

**From:** Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church  
Department of Communications  
Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities  
Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection  
Secretariat of Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth  
Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development  
Department of Migration and Refugee Services  
Secretariat of Evangelization and Catechesis  
Secretariat of Catholic Education  
Secretariat of Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations  
Secretariat of Divine Worship  
Secretariat of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs  
Office of Government Relations  
Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty

**Date:** May 9, 2016

**Re:** **The Joy of the Gospel in America: A National Convocation of Catholic Leaders**  
Orlando, Florida, July 1-4, 2017

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Next summer, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops will be convening an unprecedented gathering of key leaders from dioceses and Catholic organizations from all across the country in order to assess the challenges and opportunities of our time, particularly in the context of the Church in the United States. The gathering will assemble Catholic leaders for a strategic conversation, under the leadership of the bishops, on forming missionary disciples to animate the Church and to engage the culture.

*The Joy of the Gospel in America: A National Convocation of Catholic Leaders* will be held in Orlando, Florida, from Saturday, July 1, to Tuesday, July 4, 2017. Inspired by *Evangelii Gaudium*, the Convocation will form leaders who will be equipped and re-energized to share the Gospel as missionary disciples, while offering fresh insights informed by new research, communications strategies, and successful models.

This is an invitation-only event. A large number of leaders will be attending as diocesan delegations with their respective bishops. Others will be attending as key organizational leaders identified by the USCCB. This will include Catholic organizations, movements and apostolates, missions, religious institutes, agencies and institutions as key collaborators in this fundamental conversation with bishops.

If you are interested in participating in this historic gathering, it may be helpful to communicate with your bishop your desire to be considered, sooner rather than later, while understanding that the size and membership of diocesan delegations are at the discretion of each diocesan bishop. Each bishop will soon be asked to begin thinking about the make-up of his own diocesan delegation that will join him at the Convocation. He will also be asked to appoint an official diocesan liaison to the Convocation, who will coordinate registering the diocesan team.

Bishops, at various presentations, have been offered a number of suggestions to help them consider the composition of their diocesan team (for an example, see [Forming Diocesan Delegations](#)). Each delegation will be spending critical time together with their bishop, while also building relationships with other delegations and organizational representatives participating in the Convocation.

While the Convocation will include more than 3000 leaders, each organization will be limited in the size of the delegation it may send. Diocesan delegations, however, can be of a larger size, depending upon diocesan goals and budgets. A number of USCCB sponsored annual meetings with diocesan leaders have been cancelled for 2017. Funds budgeted for those meetings can be used to accommodate diocesan leader participation in the Convocation. Each diocese will be responsible for covering the travel, lodging, and an average \$450 per-person registration fee (covering a number of meals) for the members of their delegation. Very affordable rates have been negotiated with the five hotels hosting the Convocation.

Since not every interested diocesan or parish leader will be able to participate in the Convocation on site, we hope to stream important addresses and liturgies live online. More information will continue to be posted at [www.usccb.org/convocation/](http://www.usccb.org/convocation/).

When diocesan delegations return to their diocese, they will bring home both the tools and the spirit to influence parish and diocesan communities, forming a Church of the “missionary option” as envisioned by Pope Francis, in ways that take us to the peripheries to encounter poor and hurting persons. We encourage your diocesan participation in this historic Convocation where possible and at the discretion of your bishop. For additional information, please feel free to contact the USCCB office that serves as your primary communications portal for USCCB news.