

origins

CNS documentary service

Presidential Address at U.S. Bishops' General Assembly

Archbishop Kurtz

In small and often intimate gestures, there are big lessons for bishops to learn as they exercise their ministry, said Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, in his final address as president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. "No words of Jesus are more concrete in capturing God's mercy at work in our bishops' conference than his call in Matthew 25: 'What you did for one of my least, you did for me,'" he said in his remarks Nov. 14 in Baltimore at the U.S. bishops' annual fall general assembly. Archbishop Kurtz noted five encounters he had during

"For 99 years we bishops have addressed vital issues on a national level — seeking that common good and mindful of those without a voice."

his three-year tenure as president, each with a lesson learned. Archbishop Kurtz also outlined several challenges ahead for the global church, as people continue to be persecuted for their religion, and for the U.S. church, as it continues to "tirelessly promote" human dignity and as it faces "challenges to unity in truth and charity within." He urged all to move beyond the lack of civility and rancor that marked this year's U.S. presidential election and to work with elected officials, including the new Trump administration, for the common good. The bishops' meeting is "not simply a gathering — we are a family, a 'communio' of pastors. Just as a family seeks to serve each other as a prerequisite for authentic service beyond that faith, so we do, too," Archbishop Kurtz told his brother bishops. His speech follows.

Jesus spoke and acted in very concrete ways. His ways of touching hearts were not just beautiful ideas but concrete actions. We're told that Hebrew thought — unlike the abstract path we inherit from the Greeks — takes hold of the imagination and touches the whole person. It's why Jesus' parables and miracles are ever new, and it's why Pope Francis, who speaks to the concrete, gains such appeal.

Serving Christ is not simply a beautiful idea. It shows itself in concrete actions. The jubilee Year of Mercy comes to a conclusion this Sunday. The 100th year of this plenary gathering of U.S. bishops begins this month. No words of Jesus are more concrete in

continued on page 402

contents

- 401 Presidential Address at USCCB General Assembly by Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz
- 404 Apostolic Nuncio's Address to USCCB by Archbishop Christophe Pierre
- 407 Postelection Statement on Immigration and Refugees by Bishop Eusebio L. Elizondo
- 408 Homily at Mass at St. Peter Claver Church by Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz
- 409 Report of Task Force to Promote Peace in Our Communities by Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory
- 411 Video Message on Fifth Encuentro by Pope Francis
- 411 Interfaith Prayer Service After U.S. Election by Archbishop José H. Gomez
- 412 Homily at Jubilee Mass for the Excluded by Pope Francis
- 414 Interreligious Gathering by Pope Francis
- 416 Datebook and On File

Nov. 24, 2016
Volume 46
Number 26

22 49A
