

# OUR CONTINUED CALL TO GLOBAL SOLIDARITY

Some time ago, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) issued a statement, “Called to Global Solidarity: International Challenges for U.S. Parishes,” to ground their approach as a call to action for all pastors, parish leaders and other involved Catholics. The opening paragraph reads:

“At a time of dramatic global changes and challenges, Catholics in the United States face special responsibilities and opportunities. We are members of a universal Church that transcends national boundaries and calls us to live in solidarity and justice with the peoples of the world. We are also citizens of a powerful democracy with enormous influence beyond our borders. As Catholics and Americans, we are uniquely called to global solidarity.”<sup>1</sup>



BRUCE  
COMPTON

While it has been 25 years since its initial publication, this statement is one that I often return to. Many of its concerns still remain timely, and while it is heartening to think of how much has changed, it is also startling to think of how much has not.

Within this statement, a list of global issues calling American Catholics to solidarity is marked with the subhead,

“Signs of the Times.” These “signs of suffering and need” were reflective of 1997’s global landscape, one defined by a rapid spread of information through the internet, which raised awareness and corresponding global concern. They feel just as urgent — and in some cases more so — in 2022. Our call to address the health care needs of our global partners continues to propel us forward to develop collaborations that foster equity and sustainable improvements for our international communities.

## EXPANDING GLOBAL REACH

Today, genocide and ethnic violence are still prevalent globally, notably for the Uyghurs and Rohingya people in China and Myanmar. Foreign debt continues to cripple countries around the world, and low-income country debt rose to a new record in 2020.<sup>2</sup> Multiple wars and ongoing ethnic

conflicts have created refugee crises around the world. The United States-Mexico border has been effectively turned into a political volleyball with little direct movement toward humane migration policies, while an ongoing humanitarian crisis caused by poverty and violence rages in Latin America and beyond. The climate crisis continues to exacerbate these issues, yet we continue to lose ground as some of the world’s most powerful institutions hamper our ability to build consensus and enact needed change.

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Still, there is always room for hope. As the U.S. and international dioceses came together with parishes and universities to form new partnerships, relationships with health care institutions in low- and-middle-income countries began to develop. While Catholic health care was not specifically highlighted in the 1997 statement, CHA and its members have stepped up, and many have invested in the USCCB’s call to global solidarity.

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