

# Bishop Parker joins Facebook Live panel discussion at meeting of U.S. bishops

At the conclusion of the second full day of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Fall General Assembly Nov. 13, three bishops – including Auxiliary Bishop Adam J. Parker of the Archdiocese of Baltimore – answered questions from the public through a **Facebook Live** session.

The live streaming video and audio was shared through the USCCB Facebook page, and Facebook users posed real-time questions. As of Nov. 14, the Facebook video – now available on the USCCB Facebook page or YouTube channel – had 7,000 views.

The 30-minute conversation allowed for nine questions, each answered by a panel that also included Bishop Daniel E. Flores of the Diocese of Brownsville, Texas, and Bishop William A. Wack of the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee, Fla.

Panel moderator Judy Keane, USCCB director of public relations, fielded questions from the Facebook Live comments during the event. Topics included women's roles in the church, the pending bishops' pastoral letter on racism, how laity can help the situation locally and how young people can trust bishops.

"Trust is such a difficult thing – it's a difficult thing to earn, it's a difficult thing to maintain and trust is really all about relationship," Bishop Parker said during the session. "My encouragement for young people would be to get to know your bishops in your diocese individually and help us to get to know you as well.

"The reason is that sometimes when you're looking at a collective body ... it can be easy to ascribe qualities to that group as a whole, but when you break that down and the relationship is allowed to build, and we have the opportunity to get to know each other as individuals, then trust can be built and even increased."

In response to a question about how lay people can help, Bishop Wack said prayer is very important, noting that "we need to start with that and end with that."

The expertise of the laity is also needed within diocesan leadership on diocesan boards, he said.

“We need experts,” Bishop Wack said. “We need psychologists and physicians and counselors and therapists. We need mothers and fathers and parents of our children to be on these boards.”

In speaking about bishop accountability, Bishop Parker said church leaders feel “very strongly” that the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People passed in 2002 applies to the bishops, and that the same standards that would apply for priests, deacons, lay people and volunteers, apply equally to bishops.

“I think we’re all solidly committing ourselves to that at this point,” he said, “regardless of what vote we may or may not take this week, regardless of what document may get passed or produced.”

In an interview with the Catholic Review before the 7 p.m. panel, Bishop Parker said the Facebook Live event was not only an opportunity for the faithful and other concerned individuals to ask questions, but presented an opportunity for him to learn and hear from them.

“Not only does it help us get the word out about what’s happening, but it helps us receive perspectives that are out there,” he said. “The two important components to this event are right there: Facebook and live ... It’s real-time information about what is happening.”

The format provides an instantaneous two-way communication channel, a more open and young version of news when compared to print, television or radio broadcasts.

“I think it’s so important to hear what people’s concerns are,” Bishop Parker said, adding that the Vatican’s request to delay any votes related to the clergy abuse crisis shocked and upset him. “Their concerns may likewise have shifted as our agenda has shifted.”

Bishop Parker said the event was to be similar to the town hall meetings and listening sessions hosted in the past few months by the Archdiocese of Baltimore for priests, seminarians, teachers and more. He has participated in 13.

“Those conversations have really formed my ... outlook going into these (USCCB) meetings,” he said.

By listening to the concerns, feelings and views of his flock, he said he feels compelled to do his best to be their voice and work toward meeting their goals.

*Watch the Facebook Live session **here**.*

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