



**THE UNITED STATES CHAPTER OF THE
COMMITTEE OF PAN AMERICAN JUDGES ON SOCIAL JUSTICE, INC.**
1100 Poydras Street, Suite 3100, New Orleans, Louisiana 70163
Office: (518) 249-7639 Fax: (504) 207-3880
Email: contact@uscopaju.com
Website: <https://uscopaju.com/>

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**Statement from the United States Chapter of the
Committee of Pan American Judges for Social Justice (US-COPAJU)
In Honor of the Legacy of His Holiness Pope Francis**

US- COPAJU joins judges across the Americas in honoring the life and enduring legacy of His Holiness Pope Francis, whose voice continually called us to a deeper awareness of the human face of justice. From his earliest messages to the judiciary, Pope Francis affirmed that the administration of justice is not merely a technical or institutional function, but it is a profoundly human vocation. That vision laid the groundwork for the founding of COPAJU.

When judges from across the Americas gathered at the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences at the Vatican in 2019, Pope Francis encouraged the creation of this permanent network to strengthen judicial collaboration: “One of the objectives of this meeting is the formation of a Pan American Permanent Committee of Judges... to overcome loneliness in the judiciary, providing support and mutual assistance to revitalize the exercise of its mission.” In 2023, Pope Francis gave formal recognition to COPAJU as a Private Association of the Faithful with international juridical status, marking a new phase in its global mission to uphold social justice and judicial integrity. He also approved the establishment of the Fray Bartolomé de las Casas Institute, under the auspices of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, to further this important academic work.

For judges in the United States, where judicial independence and individual rights are constitutionally protected, Pope Francis’s message is a reminder that the law must never lose sight of humanity, compassion, and the common good. His words, “There is no democracy with hunger. There is no development with poverty. And there is no justice in inequality,” echo a core mission of US-COPAJU: “to facilitate cooperative systemic changes that enhance the efficacy and fairness of legal systems worldwide, focusing on vulnerable, marginalized, and peripheral communities through education, dialogue, and the practical and fair application of social justice principles.”

As members of US-COPAJU, we renew our commitment to this mission. We remain dedicated to supporting a judiciary that recognizes the human dignity of every person and seeks to serve those most in need. In doing so, we uphold a vision of justice that reaches beyond the courtroom and into the lives of those often left behind.

May this mission continue to guide our work, and may the enduring concern for the poor that Pope Francis so often expressed throughout his life remain a source of inspiration for all who serve the cause of justice.