



AMERICAN NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH

An Open Letter to His Holiness Pope Francis

7 October 2019

Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary

Your Holiness:

As Presiding Bishop of the American National Catholic Church (ANCC), it's been on my mind and heart in recent months to write to you. I have two reasons for doing so.

The first is to convey my heartfelt regret at the continued assaults you've endured from conservative critics within your communion. Their criticism stems from their vehement dislike of your efforts to shepherd the Roman Catholic Church in the spirit of the Vatican Council-II. The most recent example of their animosity was on full display in July at the Napa Institute when Cardinal Raymond Burke, George Weigel, and others claimed that under your leadership the Roman Church has fallen into serious doctrinal and moral error.

I humbly encourage you to continue with the mission you've undertaken as pope to remind the Roman Church of what's truly important in the service of Our Lord.

My second reason for writing you is to affirm that the jurisdiction over which I preside is bringing to fruition the dream I believe you have for the Catholic tradition we both love. Inspired by Vatican II's vision of what the Body of Christ is called to be, the ANCC upholds the social justice principles of subsidiarity and solidarity, practices a polity that avoids top-down authoritarianism and encourages synodality, and strives to evangelize in the spirit of humility, charity, and inclusivity.

Fifty years ago, Saint John XXIII threw open the windows of the Roman Church to let in the fresh air of the twentieth century. I applaud your efforts to reopen those windows in the twenty-first century. Please pray for me, as I will pray for you, that both of us may continue, each in our own jurisdictions, to uphold with integrity, creativity, and gratitude Vatican II's vision of what the Church might be.

I remain your brother in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "George R. Lucey, FCM".

The Most Reverend George R. Lucey, FCM
Presiding Bishop