



## AMERICAN NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH

May 4, 2025  
Feast of the English Martyrs

### **A Pastoral Letter Concerning the Use of Artificial Intelligence to Depict President Donald J. Trump as the Pope**

Beloved in Christ,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

It is with deep sadness and firm conviction that I write to you today in response to a recent artificial intelligence-generated image circulating online, depicting President Donald J. Trump clad in papal vestments and postured as the Bishop of Rome. While satire and political commentary have long been part of our cultural discourse, this particular image represents something far more troubling: a mockery of the sacred office of the Holy Father and, by extension, a profound disrespect for the People of God and the sacred tradition we have inherited.

The American National Catholic Church, a Catholic jurisdiction with valid apostolic succession though not in communion with the Bishop of Rome, nevertheless holds the papacy—and the office of the Holy Father—with deep respect. We recognize it as a symbol of unity for many Catholics around the world, and we affirm the dignity of the episcopal office as instituted by Christ for the leadership and care of the Church.

To mock this sacred office is to mock the faith of millions. It trivializes the sacrifices of the countless women and men who have handed down the deposit of faith—often at great cost and with immense courage. These faithful stewards gave us more than doctrine; they gave us a living witness to Christ's love, justice, and humility. They proclaimed the Good News not with artificial images, but with real lives transformed by grace.

We are especially grieved by what this action reveals: a pattern of attention-seeking behavior, often symptomatic of someone afflicted with an exaggerated sense of self-importance. This is not merely poor taste or provocative political theater—it is spiritual narcissism. Such conduct is incompatible with the humility and reverence that are the marks of true leadership in service of the common good.

In the Rite of Baptism, after the renewal of our vows, we proclaim: *"This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus our Lord."* These are not empty words. They are a declaration of identity, solidarity, and commitment. They remind us that we do not shape our faith to suit our image, but rather allow the image of Christ to shape us.

Therefore, as a community rooted in the Catholic tradition and deeply committed to the dignity of all persons and the integrity of the Church, we denounce this image and all such expressions that degrade what is holy, sow confusion among the faithful, and substitute spectacle for substance.

Let us instead rededicate ourselves to the authentic witness of Christ. Let us speak truth with love, uphold the sacred with courage, and carry forward the faith entrusted to us by the saints and martyrs whose shoulders we stand upon.

With pastoral affection and unwavering hope,

Most Rev. George R. Lucey, FCM  
Presiding Bishop