



AMERICAN NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH

June 12, 2025

Thursday of the Tenth Week in Ordinary Time

Pastoral Letter from the Office of the Presiding Bishop

"But you! You have eyes only for greed and dishonesty! You murder the innocent, oppress the poor, and reign ruthlessly."

— Jeremiah 22:17

Dearly Beloved in Christ,

In the name of the Father, and of the Son+, and of the Holy Spirit

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Risen Savior.

The prophet Jeremiah's ancient cry echoes loudly in our own day: a lament and a judgment upon leaders whose authority no longer serves the people, but instead protects privilege, sows injustice, and multiplies human suffering. The Church—our Church—cannot remain silent while oppression advances and the vulnerable are sacrificed on the altar of political ambition.

It is in this spirit that I write to you today. The Christian vocation is never reducible to ideology. But it is always profoundly moral. It is rooted in the Gospel imperative to uphold the dignity of every person created in the image of God. And that imperative demands, in every age, courageous resistance to immorality in leadership—whether it emerges from the corridors of government, business, or within the Church herself.

The Responsibility to Resist

The Second Vatican Council spoke with piercing clarity about the responsibility of the faithful in the modern world. In *Gaudium et Spes*, the Council Members declared:

"Citizens must be mindful of the right and also the duty to use their free vote to further the common good. It is necessary that all citizens be conscious of their right and duty to promote the common good by casting their votes freely and conscientiously" (GS, §75).

But this responsibility goes beyond elections. The Council reminds us that **conscience must be formed not by partisan loyalty, but by the demands of the Gospel**. When leaders enact laws or policies that violate the dignity of the poor, the immigrant, the LGBTQ+ person, the child, or the vulnerable elderly, **we must name these actions for what they are: immoral**. And more, we must resist them—not out of political allegiance, but in fidelity to Christ.

In *Dignitatis Humanae*, the Council upheld the sacred right of conscience, particularly when conscience stands against unjust authority:

“It is through his conscience that man sees and recognizes the demands of the divine law. He is bound to follow this conscience faithfully in all his activity so that he may come to God...” (DH, §3)

This, dear friends, is not ideology. This is discipleship.

A Time of Crisis and Confusion

We find ourselves in a moment of grave national disorder. The current federal administration, through a pattern of deliberate disinformation, manipulation of legal structures, and disregard for the most vulnerable among us, has **sowed chaos and confusion across our civic landscape**. What we witness is not merely policy disagreement. We are confronting a **disintegration of truth and a coarsening of public life**—one that endangers our democracy and our moral integrity as a nation.

And nowhere is this more evident than in states like **California**, where under the guise of “public order” or “federal overreach,” we now see **increasing state-sponsored hostility toward transgender youth, immigrant families, and those offering sanctuary and care**. As people of faith, we must speak plainly: when the state coerces silence, enforces conformity, or penalizes compassion, **it ceases to be a servant of the people and becomes instead a tool of oppression**.

Let us be clear: Christian opposition to injustice is not about political partisanship. It is about Gospel fidelity. Jesus Himself overturned tables in the temple and called out leaders who “load people with burdens hard to bear” (Luke 11:46). He was not executed for political moderation. He was crucified for the clarity of His radical command to love everyone and his preferential option for the poor. His witness to the Law of love and commitment to living it out was a powerful threat it posed to those in power.

Our Church’s Witness

As the American National Catholic Church, we are uniquely placed to speak and act boldly. We are a Church born of Vatican II, animated by the Spirit, and committed to a vision of Catholicism that is inclusive, sacramental, and just. Our proclamation of the Gospel must extend beyond our sanctuaries and into the public square.

I urge each of you—clergy and laity alike—to:

- **Form your conscience daily** by prayer, study of the Gospels, and attention to the social teaching of the Church.
- **Resist apathy and silence** in the face of injustice, especially when it is wrapped in religious or patriotic language.
- **Accompany the marginalized**, not only in charity, but in advocacy.
- **Refuse complicity** with leaders who manipulate faith for power, and speak plainly when the emperor has no clothes.

Let us not forget that **the early Church grew under regimes that tried to silence it**. Our spiritual ancestors gathered in catacombs, not because they were revolutionaries, but because they were faithful.

So too must we be.

A Final Word

These are difficult days, but they are not without hope. The Spirit that descended on Pentecost still moves among us. The Church still has power when it speaks with moral clarity and acts in the name of love.

May we be found worthy of the Gospel we proclaim.

And may we remember the prophet's cry—not as a condemnation alone, but as a call to conversion:

“But you! You have eyes only for greed and dishonesty! You murder the innocent, oppress the poor, and reign ruthlessly.”

Not so with us. Not now. Not ever.

With every blessing in Christ,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Most Rev. George R. Lucey, FCM". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Most Rev. George R. Lucey, FCM
Presiding Bishop
American National Catholic Church