



AMERICAN NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH

July 4, 2025

Memorial of St. Elizabeth of Portugal

Woe to the shepherds who mislead and scatter the flock of my pasture, says the Lord. Therefore, thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, against the shepherds who shepherd my people: You have scattered my sheep and driven them away. You have not cared for them, but I will take care to punish your evil deeds.

—Jer. 23:1-2

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son +, and of the Holy Spirit.

Grace and peace to you.

The American National Catholic Church joins its voice with those of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and other faith leaders in expressing deep concern over the passage of the misleadingly named *Big Beautiful Bill*. This legislation threatens to inflict the greatest harm on those who are most vulnerable and most in need of the support our government can—and should—provide. To deny such care in the interest of protecting the wealth of the few is not only a moral failing, but stands in direct contradiction to the teachings of Christ and the core values of human dignity and mutual respect found at the heart of our Catholic tradition.

As a faith community rooted in the radically inclusive love of Christ, the American National Catholic Church affirms our call to civic responsibility. We are mindful that the framers of our Constitution were deeply influenced by the idea that natural law, derived from God, endows all people with inherent rights—rights that uphold human dignity and foster a just and moral society in which all may flourish.

Guided by the Holy Spirit and grounded in the universal (catholic) teachings of Jesus Christ, the ANCC believes that government, like the Church, should serve the common good and uplift the many, not just the privileged few. As *Gaudium et Spes*, the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, reminds us:

“The political community exists for the common good, in which the community finds its full justification and meaning.”

It goes on to teach that:

“It is in full accord with human nature that juridical political structures should, with ever better success and without any discrimination, afford all their citizens the chance to participate freely and actively in establishing the constitutional bases of a political

community, governing the state, determining the scope and purpose of various institutions, and choosing leaders."

On this Independence Day, as we celebrate our nation's founding and the Declaration that proclaimed liberty from an unjust monarch who saw his subjects only as means to enrich his treasury, we are reminded again of our Christian call to be a people who bind up the wounded, heal the sick, welcome the stranger, and bring home the lost.

We must also remain vigilant in rejecting the false prophets of our time—those who would twist the Gospel to deny Christ's preferential option for the poor; who seek to strip others of their dignity based on race, language, sexual orientation, or gender; and who foster policies that marginalize and demonize those who are different. These are not the values of Christ.

We know our voice is small—indeed, often a voice crying out in the wilderness—but we must be relentless in opposing the tide of greed and corruption that betrays the Gospel. We proclaim not the rule of empire or personal wealth, but the reign of the One True King, whose Kingdom is built on love, justice, and the common good.

In New York Harbor stands a statue bearing the name *Liberty Enlightening the World*. At its base are the words of Emma Lazarus:

"Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free."

This hope lives still—in the spirit of every American and in the heart of every immigrant who has come seeking a place where human dignity is honored and peace is possible. Yet today, that hope is darkened by the passage of a bill that betrays our deepest values and uses rhetoric meant to divide rather than unite.

As Christians, we are called to stand in the breach, to lift up the truth, and to remind one another of the mission entrusted to us by Christ. We serve the One King who came not to be served, but to serve—and to love us all.

✙ Amen.



Most Rev. George R. Lucey, FCM
Presiding Bishop