



AMERICAN NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH

January 20, 2025
Memorial of Saint Sebastian, Martyr

“You shall not pervert the justice due to the sojourner or to the fatherless, or take a widow’s garment in pledge, but you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this” (Deuteronomy 24:17-18).

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

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

Grace and peace to you from God our Creator, the Redeemer who walks with us, and the Holy Spirit who empowers us to live as agents of divine love in the world.

As we journey together in this sacred season of Ordinary Time, a season of hope and renewal, I write to you on this Inauguration Day, a pastoral declaration of our commitment as a Catholic jurisdiction to mercy, justice and compassion and a promise to continue commitment as members of the American National Catholic Church to embody the boundless love of God. In a world often fractured by division and exclusion, we are called to be a living sign of God’s radical inclusion, rooted in the mysteries of our Catholic faith and expressed through our unwavering commitment to the marginalized and stigmatized.

The Extravagant Love of God

At the heart of our faith is the unshakable truth that God’s love is extravagant and unconditional. This love was made manifest in the incarnation, passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, who embraced all, especially those deemed unworthy by societal standards. As followers of Christ, we are invited to mirror this love—a love that sees the dignity and worth of every human being, created in the image of God.

Our commitment to radical inclusion flows from this foundational truth. It is not merely an ideal but a lived reality that compels us to welcome all who seek God’s grace, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, or life circumstances. In our parishes, ministries, and daily encounters, we are called to create spaces where all can encounter the liberating and healing presence of Christ.

A Church for the Marginalized and Stigmatized

The Gospel repeatedly shows us Jesus’ special concern for those on the margins—the poor, the outcast, the sinner, and the forgotten. In this, we find our mission: to stand in solidarity with those who have been pushed to the edges of society, offering not judgment but compassion, not exclusion but embrace.

As a Church, we recommit ourselves to walking alongside those who have been wounded by prejudice, rejected by religious institutions, or left voiceless by systemic injustice. This includes our LGBTQ+ siblings, immigrants and refugees, those experiencing homelessness, and all who suffer from discrimination and exclusion. May our words and actions proclaim to them the Good News: that they are beloved, valued, and welcomed in the household of God.

The Dignity and Worth of Women

Central to our witness as the American National Catholic Church is our affirmation of the equal dignity and worth of women. We recognize the invaluable contributions of women to the life of the Church and the world, and we stand firmly against any structures or attitudes that diminish their God-given gifts.

In our commitment to justice and equality, we affirm the call of women to all levels of ministry and leadership within the Church. Their voices, perspectives, and gifts are not ancillary but essential to the flourishing of the Body of Christ. Let us continue to nurture communities where women's leadership is celebrated, and their prophetic witness is heeded.

Our Shared Journey

As we move forward together, let us hold fast to the values that define us as a Church: radical inclusion, compassion for the marginalized, and a steadfast commitment to justice and equality. These are not mere aspirations but the tangible ways we live out our faith in the God who has first loved us.

May our hearts be ever open to the movement of the Holy Spirit, who calls us to deeper love, greater courage, and unwavering hope. Let us continue to build communities that shine as beacons of God's extravagant love in a world yearning for healing and reconciliation.

With every blessing,



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