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Association of U.S. Catholic Priests Joins Pope Leo XIV in Urgent Call for Peace and Sovereignty in Venezuela

TIFFIN, OHIO — January 5, 2026 — The Association of U.S. Catholic Priests (AUSCP) issues an urgent call for peace, non-violence, and the restoration of international law following the recent military intervention in Venezuela. Standing in resolute solidarity with the Venezuelan people, the AUSCP joins Pope Leo XIV and religious leaders worldwide in prioritizing human dignity and diplomatic dialogue over military force.

Following the U.S. military operation on January 3, 2026, which resulted in the capture of President Nicolás Maduro and reported casualties in Caracas, the AUSCP emphasizes that the immediate welfare of the Venezuelan people must remain the paramount concern of the global community.

"Our commitment to a synodal Church requires us to decry violence as a first resort in responding to global disagreements," the Association stated. "We remain deeply concerned by the tendency to favor interventionist violence over the essential tools of dialogue and negotiation."

The AUSCP echoes the sentiments expressed by Pope Leo XIV during his Angelus address on January 4, asserting that the "well-being of the beloved Venezuelan people must prevail over all other considerations." The Association joins the Holy Father in calling for:

- **Respect for Sovereignty:** An immediate return to the paths of justice and peace that respect Venezuela's right to autonomy and self-determination.
- **The Rule of Law:** Adherence to the constitutional frameworks and international laws that ensure stability in the Western Hemisphere.
- **Protection of the Vulnerable:** Special attention to the poorest citizens who bear the heaviest burden of economic instability and conflict.

As a community of over 1,000 priests and associates, the AUSCP offers its prayers for the families of those who have lost their lives and for the recovery of the wounded. We call upon our nation's leaders to pivot from military governance toward a "culture of encounter," seeking a serene future of collaboration and harmony.

"Lasting stability cannot be imposed from the outside; it can only be achieved through paths of justice that honor the dignity of every citizen," the statement concluded.

About the Association of U.S. Catholic Priests (AUSCP)

Founded in 2011, the AUSCP is the largest association of Catholic priests in the United States.

Inspired by the teachings of Vatican II and the call to synodality, the Association serves as a pastoral voice of compassion, hope, and prophetic action within the Church and the world.

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