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Statement on the Sacred Duty of Peace and the Moral Voice of the Holy Father

A Call to Dialogue and Mutual Respect

The Association of U.S. Catholic Priests (AUSCP) views with deep concern the escalating rhetoric directed toward our Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV. As a community of over 1,000 priests and pastoral ministers, we stand in resolute solidarity with the Vicar of Christ. His recent calls for a "diplomacy of encounter" rather than a "diplomacy of force" are not political maneuvers; they are the direct application of the Gospel to a world weary of conflict.

The Independence of the Church's Moral Voice

We must clarify that the Holy Father does not speak as a partisan actor or a political rival. When Pope Leo XIV cautions against the "delusion of omnipotence" in global affairs, he is echoing the perennial teaching of the Church that "might does not make right." To suggest that the successor of Peter is an agent of any political ideology—or to question the legitimacy of his election—is a grave disservice to the millions of American Catholics who look to him for moral guidance.

Prioritizing the Common Good over National Interests

The AUSCP emphasizes that our primary loyalty is to the Kingdom of God and the dignity of the human person. We urge our nation's leaders to move past defensive posture and engage in the substantive moral questions the Holy Father has raised regarding:

- **The Pro-Life Imperative:** Recognizing that a consistent ethic of life requires us to renounce war as a standard instrument of policy.
- **The Rule of Law:** Upholding international norms and the sovereignty of nations as essential for global stability.
- **Care for the Vulnerable:** Acknowledging that the poorest among us always bear the heaviest burden of military and economic escalation.

A Prophetic Call to Encounter

We invite our brother priests and all people of good will to join us in prayer for both the Holy Father and our national leaders. We call for a "culture of encounter" that replaces pugilistic rhetoric with courageous dialogue. Let us remember the words of our Lord: *"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."*

The Leadership of the Association of U.S. Catholic Priests

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