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Pope Francis boards the plane in Italy for his trip to Colombia Sept. 6.
(CNS/L'Osservatore Romano via EPA)



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Pope Francis is on his way to Colombia, and NCR's Joshua McElwee is aboard the papal flight [and tweeted](#) that the flight path may have to be adjusted because of Hurricane Irma. Observers say this trip to a country still divided after a 50-year war [will be a test for the pope](#) and his message of mercy.

A new report shows [the number of white evangelicals — and white Catholics — in America is decreasing](#). Other findings: the Catholic population is headed South.

It was hard to keep up with the bishops and other church leaders expressing outrage yesterday over the Trump administration's decision to end the DACA program for children brought to the U.S. illegally by their parents. Global Sisters Report has a [roundup of the response](#) by Catholics in support of the Dreamers, and Michael Sean Winters says [even DACA is not enough](#) amnesty for undocumented immigrants.

Catholic Charities has [collected \\$2 million for relief](#) in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey in Houston. Meanwhile, Irma is hitting the Caribbean today.

In church news, the Association of Catholic Priests in Ireland is calling for bishops to wait for the Vatican commission on women deacons' report before introducing permanent deacons in their dioceses. Otherwise, they risk adding ["another male clerical layer to ministry,"](#) the priests say. NCR editors say the church should [open the door to women's ordination](#), not just to the diaconate, but to priesthood as well.

The [influence that evangelical Christian leaders have on the president is unprecedented, finds this three-part series](#) that details the people, the issues and their effects on policy.

And, for those of us who couldn't attend the discussion about the church and the LGBT community at Fordham University last night, here's a [video of the conversation](#) between Jesuit Fr. Jim Martin and Patrick Hornbeck, chair of Fordham's department of theology, moderated by Natalia Imperatori-Lee of Manhattan College.

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Opinion

If you're looking for inspiration in light of the natural and human-made disasters in the news, Francine Dempsey [finds hope in the letters of Elly Hillesum](#), who died in a concentration camp.

[We can experience transcendence and presence even in the "not seeing,"](#) says Global Sisters Report columnist Michele Morek.

This [book review](#) looks at the systematic racism in the Emmett Till case. (Till's cousin, a witness to the abduction, [died Monday](#).)

Jesuit Father Tom Reese is headed to the Religion News Association convention in Nashville (so are NCR Editor Dennis Coday and GSR Managing Editor Pam Hackenmiller). Reese [ponders the future of religion reporting in his column](#).