Opinion
Editorial



People gather near the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, Aug. 10. (CNS/Tyler Orsburn)

by NCR Editorial Staff

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November 1, 2017
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During a recent planning session, the NCR editorial team recalled the emotions that swirled through our various communities a year ago when Donald Trump was

elected president. Reactions were intense. Calls for action quickly followed the rush of emotions, and people began organizing themselves. Remembering all that, we set out to explore two questions: Had the intensity of the moment been sustained in the year since Trump's election? What has the progressive Catholic community learned in that year?

A Nation Under Trump

As the anniversary of Donald Trump's election as president of the United States approached, the NCR staff wondered if the calls to action that persisted immediately following the election remained as urgent. We identified several policy issues to explore and asked NCR reporters to interview key players about what has transpired since Nov. 8, 2016. The entire series can be found here.

Our series of stories in the coming week, "A Nation Under Trump," found the answer to the first question is yes. To be precise, the first rush of raw emotion probably has worn off, but the commitment that the emotions sparked to seek justice for immigrants, women, the poor and disadvantaged, the sick and homeless, as well as the struggling middle class, remains strong.

What has the progressive Catholic community learned since last year? We have found only partial answers to that question, probably because the answers continue to evolve. We did learn that Catholics have been at the heart of actions over the last year. Catholics were at the Women's March Jan. 21. Catholics rushed to airports to protest Trump's travel ban and then offered refugees and immigrants sanctuary, support, legal aid and hope. Catholics marched for science, and on the 100th day of Trump's presidency, Catholics marched for the climate.

Catholics signed petitions and confronted congressional representatives at town hall meetings. Catholics helped thwart attempts to throw 20 million or more people out of the health care system and are helping shape a bipartisan approach to immigration reform. The next challenge before us is to put a check to unfair tax plans and to protect essential social programs from budget cuts. We have a record to be proud of this past year, but much work remains.

A pivotal moment for the Catholic community was the fiery speech San Diego Bishop Robert McElroy delivered to community organizers in Modesto, California, in February. McElroy challenged them to become disrupters:

> *We must disrupt those who would seek to send troops into our streets to deport the undocumented, to rip mothers and fathers from their families. We must disrupt those who portray refugees as enemies, rather than our brothers and sisters in terrible need. We must disrupt those who train us to see Muslim men and women and children as sources of fear rather than as children of God. We must disrupt those who seek to rob our medical care, especially from the poor. We must disrupt those who would take even food stamps and nutrition assistance from the mouths of children.*

He also said we must be rebuilders and "make the issues of jobs, housing, immigration, economic disparities and the environment foundations for common efforts, rather than of division."

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A few hundred stood before the San Diego bishop, but his message was meant for us all. He reminded us that the organizing principles — see, judge and act — that have inspired Catholic action groups around the world are "a powerful pathway for those who seek to renew the temporal order in the light of the Gospel and justice."

The bywords for today's Catholic community must be "see," "judge" and "act." They will give us direction for the journey. If adverbs are attached, we would suggest "see clearly," "judge compassionately" and "act together."

This story appears in the **A Nation Under Trump** feature series. View the full series
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A version of this story appeared in the **Nov 3-16, 2017** print issue.