Opinion

by Dennis Coday

View Author Profile

dcoday@ncronline.org
Follow on Twitter at @dcoday

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

February 2, 2018

Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint



Today I am launching our new online letters to the editor column, based on the old-fashioned letters to the editor format. Send me your thoughts and ideas, reactions and responses. I will collect them, curate them and every Friday afternoon, I will post a collection to the NCR Today blog.

Directions on how to join the conversation follow the letters.

Give Trump respect due a president

Dear Editor,
Much as I truly enjoy reading almost every article and editorial in NCR, my own filter system reacts wildly when being subjected to NCR's one sided vitriol regarding our duly elected President, Donald Trump. (Jan. 19, "A Nation Under Trump: An NCR retrospective")

At the helm of our local, county paper, we have a very wise editor who, of necessity, selects the required number of AP articles, features weekly columns by excellent Democrat and Republican journalists and chooses the best of bipartisan responses for his comment page. Although Frank of the Daily Interlake writes his own editorials from a conservative perspective, he does so thoughtfully and intelligently with true concern for the needs of all of his readers.

NCR has always had a reputation for being the Catholic-Christian voice for the voiceless. Please do not forget the many voices of those who might disagree with the political drift of your editorial staff lest you lose our loyal interest and our yearly donations.

Nancy J. McGunagle
Kalispell, Montana

****

Dear Editor,
I think it is important that communication be a two-way street whether by the preacher or the columnist. I don't want to listen to a discussion on the latest community scandal or debate on the abysmal loss of the local football team from the pulpit. Neither do I want a letter from the bishop telling me for whom to vote in the next election. I welcome guidance as to what is morally right or wrong but I make my own decisions based on that guidance.

I feel that the columnist owes his readers the same courtesy in regard to their ability to evaluate the information he provides. I think the editor has a responsibility to evaluate the columns he publishes and apply the same limits he would apply to letters to the editor.

I usually enjoy Michael Sean Winter's articles, though I do not always agree with him, but I think you need to look a little more critically at some of them. The NCR is a

Catholic newspaper, though happily an independent one and while it may disagree with politicians, I think Winter's article on Trump's speech (Jan. 31, "The most divisive president in US history champions unity in State of the Union address. What?") last night went over the line.

I'm not enamored of Trump, but he is president and so far the country is doing better under him than under his two immediate predecessors. Specifics about his policies may be legitimately criticized, but the blanket condemnation in today's article is counter-productive.

William T. Keane
Leessburg, Florida

Church can, should do more to keep immigrants safe

Dear Editor,
I enjoyed the editorial "Times require loud, bold defense of migrants," which called Catholics to bold action. I would only add that Catholic churches must offer sanctuary as well. We are already providing many services to immigrants and advocating, protesting with them. Sadly, for many of our brothers and sisters that is not enough.

There are a few Catholic sanctuary churches and institutions. We need to follow their lead and use all our resources as a Catholic Church to protect our people, even if it means offering sanctuary and breaking the law. I would add even if it means breaking church law. Catholic folks should also disobey the bishops who refuse to allow their parishes to offer sanctuary. Offer sanctuary without the bishop's support.

Having one person in sanctuary will not affect parish life in a negative way. My experience with Amanda Morales who is in sanctuary in a New York City church is that the congregation is more vital and more members have joined.

We have so many open churches that are not used during the week. We also have many closed churches and buildings that could be declared sanctuary spaces. Catholics could offer sanctuaries all over the United States. Let us act now.

Felix Cepeda
Bronx, New York

Advertisement

Priests have plan to save parishes

Too well Phyllis Zagano (NCR Dec. 27, "The church cannot succumb to hurry sickness") tells a mournful tale: The loss of pastoral care in Catholic parishes in this country. She cites "speed" as the problem: Bishops' speed in closing or combining parishes because they lack priests, and having one priest care for multiple parishes.

We would also characterize the sickness as slowness, delay or procrastination. For at least 20 years — in the First World — this oncoming crisis has been clear to many concerned Catholics. Yet to this very day, we are not aware of any discussion of it at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. If there is discussion it evidently is kept confidential. Why?

The number of available priests has plummeted. Of the 25,000 diocesan priests in our country, exactly one-third are retired. And there are 18,000 parishes. In the rush "to get someone in there," bishops are appointing priests as pastors to two-three-four parishes. This will not produce good results. Many parishes would be better served by lay ecclesial or pastoral ministers. Canon 517.2 provides for this "in time of need." How much more "need" is necessary?

The Association of U.S. Catholic Priests have forwarded a proposal to the American bishops that would recognize a new official position in the parish, a "pastoral leader" or "parish life coordinator" who would lead the parish under the supervision of a priest, the canonical pastor. Tested candidates with mature faith and pastoral experience are available now. We need them now.

Fr. John Hynes, Wilmington, Delaware
Msgr. Raymond L. Cole, Metuchen, New Jersey

Join the Conversation

Just like the old-fashioned letters to the editors, I will not be posting everything sent to me and submissions will have to conform to the rules, but I pledge to do my best to represent the full range of letters that I receive. Here are the rules:

- Letters to the editor should be submitted to comments@ncronline.org.

- Letters to the editor should be limited to 250 words.
- First consideration is given to letters written in response to an article that has appeared on NCRonline.org.
- Letters must include your name, street address, city, state and zip code.
    - We will publish your name and city, state, but not your full address.
- Please include a daytime telephone number where we can reach you.
    - We will not publish your phone number. It may be used for verification.
- We can't guarantee publication of all letters, but you can be assured that your comments will receive careful consideration.
- Published letters may be edited for length and style.

These are the same rules that have guided the letters to the editor column in our print edition for 53 years, so I hope they work here, too.

Today’s conversation starter.

The story “Failures offer opportunity to improve protection efforts, expert says,” quotes Sara Boehk, a researcher at Rome's Center for Child Protection, which is part of the Pontifical Gregorian University:

> Failure, therefore, becomes "an opportunity to reassess where we are in our safeguarding efforts, to refocus our energies, and to recommit to our goals," Boehk wrote.
>
> Real change, she said, is "a long, arduous journey, and cultural change in the oldest and largest institution in this world, the Catholic Church, will take many years, maybe a generation or more."
>
> "Failures along the way are inevitable, but we can allow them to motivate us to strive for more focused and consistent efforts, entrusting them and ourselves to the Lord of salvation," she wrote.

Do you agree with Boehk? How do you react to what she has to say? Send your thoughts to **comments@ncronline.org**.