Opinion



by Joshua J. McElwee

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Over the past five years I've been privileged to spearhead NCR's effort to keep you up-to-date with everything Pope Francis has been doing for the global Catholic Church.

After the election of Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio as pontiff in March 2013, NCR decided to reopen a full-time, resident bureau in Rome — our first in nearly a decade — to get you the news right from the source.

We also have made extraordinary efforts to travel with the pope on his trips abroad, sending you reports on how Francis braved a tropical storm to greet pilgrims in the Philippines, daringly escorted 12 Syrian refugees back with him from Greece, and even officiated a wedding mid-flight while visiting Chile.

This work demands a good deal of human and financial resources. Maintaining a foreign bureau is difficult and traveling with the pope can be rather expensive. It costs NCR about $5,000 to cover a papal trip — and Francis has averaged 4-5 a year. That expense includes access to the papal flight back to Rome, in which NCR is able to play a role in determining what questions Francis gets asked during his always memorable press conferences.

That's why we are coming to you — and making this special plea today — to support our Vatican coverage. The Spring Fund Drive only comes once a year, but our Vatican coverage happens year-round. We really do rely on you, our community, to meet these expenses.

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Know we will use your donations wisely and efficiently, keeping our Rome operation at full steam. With whatever you can give, you're helping make sure our voice is included in the conversation about what questions Francis gets asked each time he travels abroad.

Thanks for the consideration.

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This story appears in the **Spring Fund Drive 2018** feature series. View the full series.