Opinion
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by NCR Staff

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"U.S. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's stunning speech on the House floor last week has been called 'a comeback for the ages,' 'the most important feminist speech in a generation' and 'a lesson in sexism and decency.' I just call it 'truth,' " writes NCR executive editor Heidi Schlumpf in her latest Connections column. "As a young Latina, Ocasio-Cortez represents the demographic future of the Catholic Church," Schlumpf continues. "But — if there is to be a future for the Catholic Church in the United States — it must also resemble Ocasio-Cortez in her passion for justice and

human dignity, and in her courage and integrity, even in the face of vulgar attacks." Many NCR readers responded to Schlumpf's column. Following are letters that have been edited for length and clarity. Remember that in order to participate in the conversation, you must follow the rules at the end of this article.

This email is in response to the "opinion" piece titled "AOC is the future of the Catholic Church." I have never read a more distorted and juvenile view of reality. To find this article in the NCR is ridiculous and evident that "Catholicism" and truth may be secondary to your publication.

The article focuses on Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's responsive speech to her conflict with another member of the House of Representatives. I think it's a far reach to believe her "speech" was Catholic in its nature. It would be much more accurate to acknowledge her "anti-Catholic" rhetoric, specifically her support of abortion through full term and her continuous push for socialist policies.

As a Catholic, I feel the need to remind you that socialism is not in line with Catholic teaching. The first reason is that what we may call the fundamental idea of socialism is absolutely erroneous, and contradictory to Catholic teaching. And that idea is, that morality is a matter entirely in the jurisdiction of mankind, instead of being subject to the law of God that it rests on and can be determined by popular vote.

As an immigrant that came from a socialist country, I assure you that there is nothing in that political system that would justify as a Catholic teaching. As an American Catholic, I also would disagree that AOC is representative of any "future" laity.

LEE CISNEROS

Houston, Texas

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If the future of the Catholic Church is indeed people who advocate the slaughter of innocent souls in the womb then I will renounce my faith. I assume you are trying to spark a discussion but it is ridiculous to suggest that Jesus Christ would support abortion. You can be passionate about the poor, homeless, etc. without being a passionate supporter of abortion.

JAYME GARFIELD

Uniontown, Ohio



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Heidi Schlumpf's article, "AOC is the future of the Catholic Church" was right on target. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's quest for social justice is highly consistent with the Catholic Church's moral teachings.

Unfortunately, most of those teachings go by the wayside in favor of the church being anti-abortion. The Catholic Church couches it's anti-abortion actions as being pro-life, but the article is a good illustration that much of the Catholic Church's pro-life efforts are in fact inconsistent with the church's own moral teachings, because they are so strongly anti-abortion and so weakly effective regarding other pro-life issues, especially related to women's issues. If the Catholic Church really wanted to minimize abortion, it would advocate for widespread access to birth control, especially the use of condoms.

Regarding the specific comments that Congressman Ted Yoho made about AOC, the article is correct that AOC provided a brilliant and inspiring response, entirely consistent not just with Catholic teaching, but with Christian teaching. I imagine that the Christian right would argue strongly that AOC does not represent their values, but the simple truth is that they would be wrong.

With that said, I would love to hear AOC elucidate her rationale for supporting illegal abortion from the perspective of her Catholic upbringing.

DONALD MOTT

Taylorsville, North Carolina

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It is wonderful how strongly U.S. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez speaks justice truths. May we all follow her courageous lead both nationally, locally and in our own parishes. There can be no justice in our culture without justice in our church.

When we hang onto traditions that do not treat all people with equal respect but only help some people to feel the comfort of familiarity and power, the spirit of life is destroyed, not energized. Until the church fully recognizes women as equal and valued in the eyes of God and changes, the life of the church will not thrive.

How can we bow down to our God when presented by the church as having chosen only men to serve as priests and final decision makers? Injustice in the church can't be tolerated any more than at the ballot box, in the courts, in the corporate world, in the home.

CAROL COLLERAN

Lakewood, Washington

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I really appreciated Heidi Schlumpf's article on AOC and her response to Rep. Ted Yoho.

What is so said is that Yoho is supported by Catholic groups because of the "abortion" issue; they fail to address his lack of decency for "life" issues. Quite honestly, the Catholic leadership in this country has been so bent on the "abortion" issue that they have failed to address the "pro-life" actions of these same people. People of color, different races are just as valuable and to be cherished as children. But is very clear is that the bishops of this country are unwilling to address these other issues, just as important as abortion, with these leaders.

What is so strange if we take the time to stand back and objectively look is the politics of these issues. Republicans are anti-abortion but for capital punishment; Democrats are against capital punishment but support abortion. Neither group is "pro-life." Pro-life would have us all take an approach that life is precious and we ought to treat it as precious and respect it.

It is clear to me that the bishops of this country are anti-abortion; they are not pro-life for if they were pro-life, as a group, they would have spoken out when we saw the murder of George Floyd. Their silence, as a group, spoke volumes and it is not the kind of speech that we need to hear.

JAMES OFFENBERGER

Vienna, West Virginia

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Your article on AOC as the future of the Catholic Church is sickening. She is radically pro-abortion supporting both late-term and post-term abortions. If that is the Catholic Church, it should not have a future. And your publication has no right to continue to pretend any affiliation with the Catholic Church.

Truth in disclosure. Change your name to NMR — National Marxist Reporter.

PATRICK KELLEHER

Niles, Illinois

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NCR must be an anonymous contributor to DNC. I write this as AOC is like Joe Biden, mouthing Catholic teaching but not the greatest in practicing what both she/he preach. Abortion is just one instance. So, if not a financial giver to DNC, the NCR mimics their platform.

Another article attempts to denigrate the Little Sisters of the Poor because they are still in battle against the government which will, again, try and force contraceptive pills upon their health plan. The real truth, of course, being that most — if not all — women can get such pills free from the government. Therefore, it seems NCR simply disses the sisters because NCR might be pro-choice? Simply a cheap shot at women

who have gone without so that others might be served practically free in their illness or waning years.

Yup, NCR = DNC. Same old editorial visions.

FRANCIS REARDON

Boca Raton, Florida

Advertisement

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Does Heidi Schlumpf really understand the politics and beliefs of AOC? A woman who supports anarchy and abortion — the future of the Catholic Church? God help us if that is even remotely the case.

(Deacon) CHRIS M. AMANTEA

Manhattan Beach, California

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My thanks to Heidi Schlumpf for her column, "AOC is the future of the Catholic Church." I have been grateful for Ocasio-Cortez's presence in our government, her leadership on issues of the environment, human rights, economic equality and gun control, and her example of courage in the face of hostile and dangerous opposition.

Schlumpf's column made me see her in a new, important light. In that column, the observation that her speech frequently referenced Catholic values warmed my heart.

I especially thank Schlumpf for her closing:

> But — if there is to be a future for the Catholic Church in the United States — it must also resemble Ocasio-Cortez in her passion for justice and human dignity, and in her courage and integrity, even in the face of vulgar attacks.

This gives me renewed hope for the future of the Catholic Church and our country.

JENNIFER SYMONS

Green Valley, Arizona

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Okay, so am I to assume that Heidi Schlumpf despises AOC and is only suggesting that we need to show a similar passion on our side for the great moral issues of the day? Or is she endorsing a weird cancerous version of Catholicism that welcomes socialism and abortion? One that celebrates twisted minds like AOC and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi?

God help us all if "twisted Catholicism" wins this moral battle. I fear we are all in for a great deal of death and destruction in coming decades. I won't be around to see it but suspect my daughter and grandchildren will.

RICHARD IREDALE

Lake Oswego, Oregon

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Shocked to find out you are a false Catholic Church reporting company. To support AOC who has degraded every form of life in the United States and especially her no regard for the sanctity of life.

If you cannot even get it right on the most fundamental doctrine, how can I or anyone else believe you? In this time of judgment and purification when it is paramount that the faithful listen to only the true word, you represent radical changes for the church which make you the part of the dark side.

It should be illegal for you to even use the word "Catholic" in your publications.

TERESA (TERRY) PENZA

Fort Myers, Florida

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You state "if there is to be a future for the Catholic Church in the United States — it must also resemble Ocasio-Cortez in her passion for justice and human dignity." A person who fully supported New York's Reproductive Health Act allowing for abortions up to the moment of birth, is the person the Catholic church should consider their "future"? You write "Ocasio-Cortez repeatedly railed against the 'dehumanizing' of others and instead called for treating people with dignity and respect." Is abortion not the most ultimately dehumanizing act of terror by killing an innocent life?

It must be understood that by calling out AOC's ideology that directly contradicts Catholic teaching, does not mean I disagree with her statements condemning degrading of women. What it does mean, however, is that even if an individual possesses ideas that every affirmed Catholic must believe in,
while simultaneously holding ideas that directly contradict the sacred teachings of our church, they most definitely cannot be looked at as the "future" of our church, or a role model of a Catholic.

The entirety of AOC's ideology does not align with the Catholic Church, and in fact directly opposes it regarding issues of the sanctity of life and abortion. To say otherwise would oppose the very goal the Church has, and the goal you claim AOC has: the fight and desire "for justice and human dignity" of every person — regardless of race, sex, age, and regardless whether a person is inside, or outside the womb.

JONATHAN HERRERA

Lodi, California

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