Opinion



by NCR Staff

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

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

February 5, 2021
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

In the latest editorial, "It's time for the Vatican to investigate the US bishops' conference," NCR writes that since the U.S. bishops' conference couldn't help but "repeatedly praise the most deranged and destructive president in history," Pope Francis should investigate the organization, "find where it has gone wrong, and put in place substantial changes so that it can begin to speak again for all American Catholics." Following are letters to the editor responding to the editorial. They have been edited for length and clarity.

Yes, it is time for the Vatican to investigate the U.S. bishops' conference beginning with those members who have had the most press time, the most television time and the most obvious political allegiances, preferences or statements.

Perhaps the conferring of a title, a robe, and a miter has confused them and blinded them to their primary role as servant. So I call to him as a reminder that Cardinal Timothy Dolan is drawn to the camera, to the written opinion page and has become the Dear Abby for the pope and anyone who will listen to him. His personal endorsement and character references — whether they are good or bad — are not appropriate as media fodder. Perhaps the most often on air or in print or letter writing advisors to the church, to Catholic figures in the news, could be on a silent retreat for a year when it comes to public statements.

I believe Archbishop José Gomez could, "if he had a grievance with his brother … go to him first" in private. I believe President Joe Biden would have taken all of Gomez's suggestion on how to govern a country where the government can't enforce a set of religious beliefs.

I do marvel at the audacity of those who are quick and loud in seeing the speck in their brother's and sister's eyes even as they fail to see the beam in their own eyes.

KATHLEEN GARAST

Scottsdale, Arizona



***

I agree with every single word of this editorial. It is time for the Vatican to investigate the U.S. bishops' conference. Many of the bishops currently in power in the United States, remind me of the Pharisees written about in the New Testament. And this editorial by NCR reminds me of Jesus' response to those Pharisees, when Jesus called them "hypocrites."

Jesus always recognized when people in power within the Jewish faith or other entities had been seduced by evil. And Jesus called them out — Jesus used his voice and did not back down or become complicit. NCR in writing this badly needed editorial has truly imitated Jesus. I commend you. And I hope your editorial reaches Pope Francis.

Lastly, I reside in the Chicago Archdiocese, and I thank God every single day that we are blessed with Cardinal Blase Cupich who is a true beacon of light in guiding us in our Catholic faith. Bless him for using his voice to speak truth to the U.S. bishops' conference.

MARY WUDTKE

Chicago, Illinois

***

Heartiest congratulations on your editorial about the U.S. Bishops' conference and its divisive lack of leadership.

Sadly, this groveling example from the top ranks of the clergy became a feature of the church over many decades, and its cultivating of right-wing politicians, mostly men of little moral conviction and obsessed with power, control and money, seems to be a feature of the period of the two pontificates that preceded Pope Francis.

Your magazine keeps one hopeful that enlightened thinking is still alive in the church, following decades of a relapse into the darkest of ages and growing conspiracy propaganda, which has left a large part of the populace confused about what is truth.

In his attempt to re-focus Catholics on a compassionate sense of common purpose, Francis needs all the support he can get.

I was once a very active member of the clergy who got turned off by the atmosphere within the institution, but I continue to monitor its progress, and decline.

CYRIL NORTH

Brampton, Ontario

***

I wholly agree with the editorial staff on an investigation of this so-called bishop's conference. The bishops have politicized themselves and are now stewing in their own juices. How can the faithful or faith-filled ever trust or believe people who can't even trust or agree themselves?

Here's a thought. How about allowing the women religious, whom they had to investigate, take over this conference? They may be able to inspire the bishops to play nice and allow Jesus and Pope Francis to be their guide. Perhaps even a simpler garb as many of the sisters have adopted would free up those red hats allowing for a better thinking process.

JANE FRANCISCO

Charlotte, North Carolina

Advertisement

***

Thank you for putting forward the idea of asking the Vatican to investigate the U.S. bishops' conference. My displeasure at this group has grown steadily over the past few years. After the insurrection on the Capitol, my discontent turned to outrage. I

might also ask they include what's being emphasized in the seminaries.

I don't know how one gets the Vatican to move on anything but I hope someone credible and with authority will step forward and encourage the pope to authorize an investigation — soon.

Thank you for the good work you do to add rational and intelligent perspective to what's going on in the American church these days.

MARION BODEN

Hampton Bays, New York

***

I am disappointed that in the editorial you let your political passions get the better of your editorial professionalism. To refer to former President Donald Trump in your own voice as "the (former) liar-in-chief," is not responsible journalism or commentary. It expresses a raw, emotive and harsh personal judgment at a time when, I would hope, that more attention would be given to reconciling and healing our country's deep partisan divisions.

Your criticism of the U.S. bishops' conference for its own seeming partisanship surely would have had more credibility if your own partisanship weren't so distressingly obvious. Perhaps a better way forward can be found for our country: listening to seek first to understand each other while we try to let go of our own need to be "right." No side has a monopoly on "right," but bitterness and name calling surely will lead us in the wrong direction.

RAY ORTMAN

Chanhassen, Minnesota

***

I just finished reading the editorial. Your words are especially congruent with a verse from this week's Sunday Gospel, "Jesus taught the assembled as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Mark 1:22).

It is with gratitude that I, a white Catholic woman of 80 years, joins with you and proclaims "Amen."

CAROLYN A. CAVENY

Brookline, Massachusetts

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts and ideas, reactions and responses to letters@ncronline.org. The editor will collect them, curate them and publish a sampling in Letters to the Editor online or in our print edition.

We cannot publish everything. We will do our best to represent the full range of letters received. Here are the rules:

- Letters to the editor should be submitted to letters@ncronline.org.
- Letters to the editor should be limited to 250 words.
- 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.
- If the letter refers to a specific article published at ncronline.org, please send in the headline or the link of the article.
- 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 submission will receive careful consideration.

Published letters may be edited for length and style.

This story appears in the **Your thoughts** feature series. View the full series.