Opinion
Letters to the Editor

by NCR Staff

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Cardinal George Pell, who was the most senior Catholic cleric to be convicted of child sex abuse and spent 404 days in solitary confinement in his native Australia before his convictions were overturned, died Jan. 10 in Rome. He was 81. Pell, and those who are picking up his mantle, think they — and only they — have the solution to what ails the church and the world. But that hubris has hurt the church's credibility, says columnist Michael Sean Winters.

Michael Sean Winters' analysis of Cardinal George Pell was fair. There was little of Pell's viewpoint that I agreed with. Depicting Pell as a lion solidified my feelings. Like many of our ecclesial leaders, it appeared he had been specially chosen to wield his brawn in an effort to control. Therein lay the problem.



I admired Pell in the way he faced his false accusation. I am sure this was a consolation to our over one thousand priests falsely accused and the 87% who fear what happened to him.

I pray his life serves as an example of how it is not so important what we say but how we say it. May he rest in peace.

JANE FRANCISCO
Charlotte, North Carolina

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Pell was precisely the kind of clergy needed to clean up the church and bring the faithful back to the path of Catholic teachings. Since the Argentinian became pope, I have not set foot in a church other than for wedding or burial services. I have withheld tithe and refuse to participate in the dismantling of our church to accommodate sinners and others with aberrant lifestyles.

Truth be told, I can't wait for the next pope and hope he will new closer to the teachings of the Bible.

CARLOS RODRIGUEZ
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Reading "Pell's posthumous complaints have diminished his legacy" was refreshing to learn the author is seeing Pell for who he is. His double-dealing comes as no surprise. Nor should the unveiling of many others because this the way a dysfunctional religious organization operates.

Pell was the "bull in the China shop" when it came to carving out his fiefdom within the Vatican City State, elbowing out enough competitors for him to claim the number three spot. For Pell, and too many other ecclesial ladder climbers, this is how one attains the goals for which they entered the priesthood. It has nothing to do with service and everything to do with being served.

Pell played the game well enough to be called by Pope Francis from Sydney, Australia, the "down under" periphery of the Catholic world, to the center of church power in Rome.

Pell spent 404 days in the relative comfort of prison in what is called a "protective custody" unit. There he was able to write, say Mass, pray, have visitors, send and receive mail, met with legal counsel, purchase food items from the canteen or even have food brought in if it was permitted. His failure to take the legal proceedings seriously evidenced by his cavalier attitude, his blatant lies about his health not allowing him to return to Australia, and the witnesses testifying against him earned him the right to be imprisoned.

Justice demands Pell bear the full weight of his crimes against humanity. If he carried the burden of sin with him to his grave justice demands he face his God and learn what he failed in life. They reap what they sow.

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