Opinion
Letters to the Editor



by NCR Staff

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November 10, 2023
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In a recent opinion column, NCR columnist Franciscan Fr. Daniel P. Horan wrote about how before the close of this year's synod session, Pope Francis restated what the church is at its core and, in doing so, denounced a church governed by clericalism. Following are NCR reader responses to this column with letters that have been edited for length and clarity.

This article by Fr. Horan literally brought me to tears. From the moment Francis was elected pope, I have been praying daily that as he truly does his best to follow what Jesus taught, how Jesus lived and thought when he was on this earth, that it might begin to transform some of the priests, bishops, cardinals and religious who suffer from the 'clericalism disorder' into people who also follow what Jesus actually taught, how he lived and how he thought.

Clearly, as I keep a close eye on different articles about Pope Francis and others, this is not happening nearly as quickly as I hoped. I continue to pray, and I applaud Fr. Horan for being brave enough to write this article and I applaud National Catholic Reporter for publishing it. Thank you from the bottom of my heart!

MARY WUDTKE
Chicago, Illinois



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Regarding the pope's comments on clericalism, we've had enough. It's time for action.

Here's an idea: why doesn't he appoint a number of lay men and women to the College of Cardinals, say ten or twelve; half women and half men. In addition, a few religious wouldn't be a bad idea, too. And all of these new cardinals should have full electoral powers.

Now there's a "shot across the bow." Not only would it improve the College of Cardinals, but it would send a clear message to the entire clerical establishment.

Oh, and by the way, the pope has all the authority he needs to modify Canon Law to get this done.

CHARLES LADNER
Newtown Square, Pennsylvania

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This is an excellent opinion piece capturing the core of Pope Francis' papal ministry. Rejection of clericalism began on day one because he was already living the lifestyle, so held the mindset.

Clericalism undergirds all that is wrong with the church. It is a major cause for sinful and criminal behavior destroying the fabric that makes up and holds the church together.

Clericalism cannot be further from the life and ministry of Jesus and Gospel values. Yet, from the many paths the Roman Catholic Church could choose to go down, it chose this one. When one's worldly wealth and lifestyle don't reflect Gospel values, it isn't coherent with the message preached.

Clericalism is under attack and clericalists are fighting back. Clericalist clergy are supported by laity who believe in it. Some are wealthy multi-millionaires who see an opening to invest in a church that accepts their vision. Clericalism in the U.S. is intertwined with conservative platforms, giving the monied classes added leverage to attain their agenda. The Napa Institute is a prime example. While Pope Francis struggles to eliminate clericalism in the church on a global level, it is digging in its heels on local levels. It is this pull and tug that may eventually tear apart what is left of the Roman Catholic Church.

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