

by NCR Staff

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Pope Francis has punished one of his highest-ranking critics, Cardinal Raymond Burke, by yanking his right to a subsidized Vatican apartment and salary in the second such radical action against a conservative American prelate this month, reported Nicole Winfield for The Associated Press. Following are NCR reader responses to this report with letters that have been edited for length and clarity.

This is very worrisome. Pope Francis is changing our beautiful Catholic faith to conform with the present politics of 'inclusion' while excluding faithful Catholics.

Pope Francis is the one dividing us all not the traditional bishops or cardinals or priests. We are in God's hands.

ROSE CERRATO
Brooklyn, New York



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Cardinal Burke's applause-garnering statement at the Oct. 3 conference, "The sheep depend on the courage of pastors who must protect them from the poison of confusion, error and division," ironically has come back to bite him. Pope Francis, as spiritual pastor of the entire Roman Catholic Church and Burke's superior in every way, has until now shown remarkable patience with a man who is an illustrious product of a bygone era of clericalism with all of its wretched pomposity. What sane, Jesus- and gospel-loving Catholic would ever want to do a reprise of it?The "courage of pastors" is wonderfully exemplified in Francis' decision to no longer fund Burke's residence in Rome.

NANCY MCGUNAGLE
Kalispell, Montana

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Many observers of the Catholic Church as an organization are perplexed that insubordination and hostility toward the pope was not dealt with earlier. When Cardinal Burke was removed and relegated to Malta he should have experienced a feeling of humility which in a less self-righteous individual would have been

corrective. In Burke's case unfortunately, he appears to have doubled down on his criticisms of our pope.

Self-righteousness seems endemic in the clergy who support reactionary policies in our government as well as in the church. They show political support for individuals whose moral compass is flawed, using the excuse they either do not interfere in politics or they are not judgemental. Both of those arguments are specious seeing the evidence of the past few years and the rhetoric which emanates from many of our episcopal leaders.

The humiliation of Burke, unnecessary if he showed some humility, should send a message, like the termination of Bishop Strickland before him, that our pope has a mission and a vision. He is supported by the vast majority of the faithful and is imbued with the Holy Spirit. It is long past time for the American hierarchy to accept their place in the church and not attempt to diminish the leadership of our pope.

CHARLES A LEGUERN
Granger, Indiana

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Taking away Cardinal Burke's perks is long overdue. If prophetic reformer Pope Francis' pontificate is known for one thing, it's overturning the church's applecart, dumping out the rotten fruit who are nothing more than dead weight causing havoc where there should be none. Imagine the freed up resources that can be put to better use. Burke's salary alone would feed and house many hungry, homeless for a year. His apartment and attending staff savings will be better spent attaining the pope's climate change goals. Multiply this by one hundred and see the church's missionary evangelical programs expand. So much good can be done, and should have been done, with these extra resources. Thanks be to God prophetic reformer Pope Francis is setting precedents by clearing away the deadwood making the organizational chart leaner, more efficient, and cost effective.

MICHAEL J. MCDERMOTT
North Brookfield, Massachusetts