Opinion
Letters to the Editor



by NCR Staff

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Following are NCR reader responses to recent news articles, opinion columns and theological essays with letters that have been edited for length and clarity.

Open every door

Years ago a documentary on species extinction was accompanied by lyrics which have haunted me in many ways: "Will you still be there when we learn to care." The

crises which face the church and the world may make the full peership of women seem of low priority (ncronline.org, Feb. 26, 2024). Look at it this way though, solutions necessitate all necessary elements in place and in proper proportion. Preconditions matter.

Even the stereotype of women created by the church to exclude and diminish paradoxically cry out to demand the fullness of women in peership. It is not merely about ordination to the priesthood, yet it is. Only through ordination women as persons can be the 'persona' of the feminine in creation, in the church and in the world become efficacious. Pious rhetoric, 'left-handed' adulation and poetry as theology by men cannot substitute for person in place(s).

If we believe that the church will endure; if we believe that the world needs Christ, then we must 'care' enough to open every door, avenue, nook that humans occupy to women.

DENNIS MACDONALD
Bedford, Nova Scotia



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A social justice issue

As a Gannon University alumnus, I have never been so disappointed in their lack of ethics and social responsibility (ncronline.org, Feb. 19, 2024). Gannon expresses pride in being a part of Pope Francis' first cohort of Laudata Si' universities which calls for sustainability in the spirit of integral ecology. They claim to be building a

better future together with "profound care of each other, our Creator and all creation" through their Project NePTWNE.

The Blasco Library is the only library in the City of Erie, home to a large low-income population. With no public meetings before engaging in this bargain-basement, long-term lease, Gannon is taking space from the Erie public and taxpayers along with the Blasco Library program staff who offer programs and opportunities for personal, educational and economic development. The Gannon lease includes space where the library provides access to free equipment (computers, WiFi, printers), meeting rooms and staff offices. The equipment is used to find and apply for jobs, housing and benefits, renew prescriptions and take classes. The meeting rooms provide space for online job interviews, meetings with counselors to get help to find housing, mental health care and educational support.

This is a social justice issue. Gannon, who is well-endowed financially, has lost their way and the Catholic values I learned as a student. With this lease, Gannon is stealing from the citizens of Erie.

MARCYANN BENCIVENGA
McKean, Pennsylvania

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Public space

Gannon University's disregard for the people of Erie — many of whom have voiced valid concerns with the shady, underhanded and secretive process that led to the leasing of space within the public library — shows how degraded the institution is (ncronline.org, Feb. 19, 2024). How can an institution claim to educate an informed citizenry when the institution itself chooses to thumb its nose at the prospect of allowing the public a say in the placement of a project in a public space from the very start? Gannon chose to collude with the county executive in a months-long effort to keep the citizenry in the dark while they brokered a back door deal to give away public space in the public library for pennies on the dollar.

MARCIA K. FARRELL
Erie, Pennsylvania

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It's no wonder

The reactions of many anti-Francis prelates to the opening and welcome of our church is telling (ncronline.org, Feb. 21, 2024). They seem to prefer the old days of exclusivity as opposed to reaching out to all. The nature of the blessing is, from all accounts, independent of the marital relationship of the couple. The state decides who is legally married. The church decides who is married sacramentally and the state could not care about the latter distinction. If the church refuses to marry two people of the same sex in much the same way in the past it refused to marry people of different races, that is not of concern to the state. But treating our faithful brothers and sisters as second class has no place in the Catholic Church of today.

The church blesses buildings and pets. Why can't Bishop Cary see that two people, as individuals, are much more important than animals and objects? The individuals would feel welcome and a part of their church. If the church wants to retain exclusivity it should not wonder why the pews fail to fill.

CHARLES A. LEGUERN
Granger, Indiana

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Learn from the past

While all the bickering goes on about the synod, Murphy's article offers a view that is "restorative" rather than one of "synodality" (NCR, Feb. 2–15, 2024). This covers a wider scope of Catholics. The Synod is truth-telling and can therefore be a recognition of past harmful practices that were accepted by the church, but no longer. For example, it was once acceptable for Catholics to own slaves. We need an ongoing process that will address the past as well as problems today. We cannot change the past, but we can learn from it.

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