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.

Blatant racism

I read with interest Reese's column "Bipartisanship is dead; can it be resurrected?" (ncronline.org, Feb. 27, 2024). I too lament the fact that our government and our

society are both so polarized that at times it feels like the fractures are irreparable. I take great exception however, to one passage. He states, "Republican leaders since the time of President Richard Nixon had played on racial fears, which dovetailed with their Southern strategy. Most leaders did this not because they were racists but to win elections so they could pass traditional Republican programs like tax cuts and lower spending." "Playing on racial fears," no matter the intent, no matter the outcome, is blatantly racist. It demonizes a marginalized community and reinforces white supremacy. Republicans who participated in the vile Southern strategy were racist. Donald Trump, his acolytes and his MAGA base are another, more virulent, more violence-tolerant iteration of the same strategy. Most disheartening is the attitude of moderates who overlook and tolerate the egregious behavior of their leaders without calling it out because they claim to "like his policies," or out of a misguided sense of party loyalty. They are complicit in racism. Abetting racism, no matter the political party or the motive, is racist.

ANNE KIEFER
Penn Yan, New York



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No platitudes please

I appreciate the thesis behind Millies' essay in that our polarization has divided us not just as citizens but as a church as well (ncronline.org, Feb. 23, 2024). However, I believe the answer has less to do with loving our enemies and more to do with anticipating what those people will do to effect the outcome they want. Loving our

enemies may be a high moral ground answer, but it does nothing to advance the ability of our republic to thrive.

Platitudes have never been an effective rhetorical device. Engagement in our politics as well as in our church will be the only way to demonstrate that one side does not have a monopoly on the conversation. If politics is to regain the meaning from the Greek and underscore our collective interest in our society we need to be able to engage our political opponents with logic not with wishful thinking.

CHARLES A LEGUERN
Granger, Indiana

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Audio only

For those who simply read the McElwee/White article and did not hear the accompanying podcast, it is a must in order to get the full impact of Anne Doyle's critique in response to the continued lack of transparency and abuse cover ups by the Vatican and its ecclesial world (ncronline.org, Feb. 27, 2024). No one should doubt Anne's knowledge of these matters nor her sincerity. For survivors of clergy pedophilia and their advocates, Bishop Accountability has been an ongoing godsend. In the podcast, Doyle states that, due to the Vatican's criminally (my words) protective stance, change will come about not from within the church but from the continual help of dedicated "journalists, prosecutors and legislators" on the outside. As well, one can only agree with her and fellow advocates that, at the next pre-conclave conferences, clergy sexual abuse must take preeminent status.

NANCY MCGUNAGLE
Kalispell, Montana

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Ordinary English

As a now-retired parish pastor, I strongly endorse the proposal of Reese regarding a revisiting of the present English language translation of the Roman Missal

(ncronline.org, Feb. 16, 2024). Having celebrated Mass for almost 40 years using the earlier translation, I have not been happy with the 2011 text, for various reasons, stemming largely from its often opaque (allegedly "elevated") vocabulary and its awkward rhythms, so alien to ordinary English speech patterns (at least in the U.S.), as a result of Liturgiam Authenticam's insistence on favoring Latin word order and a preference for Latinate verbiage. The current translation does not advance the goal of the Second Vatican Council's liturgical reforms, which acknowledged the principle of intelligibility as essential to full and conscious participation of the faithful. We should not have to explain to the ordinary American congregation what an unusual English word means, in the effort to help them understand the liturgical action.

TIMOTHY J. SHUGRUE
Westfield, New Jersey

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Revival swag

Winters' "Did you get your Eucharistic Revival swag yet? (ncronline.org, March 4, 2024) made me think of Christine Schenk's provocative questions about cheap grace (ncronline.org, June 28, 2023). It would seem, from the monstrance (monstrous?) pillow to the socks and tee-shirts, grace at this revival will be expensive indeed. It strikes me as paradoxical, if not delusional, to expect that a parade of bishops in glittering regalia, bearing gold monstrances, will revive devotion to the One who observed that the Son of Man had no place to lay his head. Is so much expensive grace worth it?

JUDITH M. DAVIS
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