Opinion
Letters to the Editor



by NCR Staff

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

July 18, 2024
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

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

The lesser evil remains an evil

Joan Chittester recently argued that the US is in need of patriots "to make America America again" (ncronline.org, July 9, 2024). The solution to eroding democracy is to

double down on the positive contributions of American history. But her appeal formed a deep pit in my stomach, concerned that the stakes of the 2024 election are compelling US citizens to overlook all that has been done in the name of "America," and to assume that a vote for Joe Biden is a bid to return to a path of decency.

This pit grew reading Chittester's bipartisan praise for Ronald Reagan's anticommunist crusade, not seeing fit to note that his efforts enabled some of the worst dictatorships of the 20th century and led to the murders of countless people, including religious and clergy, and especially the poor, not to mention, ironically, the active thwarting of popular democratic will around the world when people dared to dream of an alternative to US and capitalist hegemony. Indeed, if this is "America," count me out.

In the 2024 election, it is clear that a vote for Donald Trump is a vote for leaning even further into that awful history; but a vote for Joe Biden, while different, is not a vote for a virtuous country. Hannah Arendt astutely observed that "those who choose the lesser evil forget quickly that they chose evil." Even worse in our day, they seem determined to call such an evil good. We can demand better.

DEAN DETTLOFF
Toronto, ONTARIO (formerly Alpena, Michigan)

***



Online spaces connect women

I read Porsia Tunzi's article just after meeting with a group of women online for Lectio Divina on Friday's gospel, something we have been doing for four years ((ncronline.org, July 12, 2024). The numbers vary and sometimes include men, but mostly it's women who faithfully show up four times each week to share insights, growth of understanding, and the impact of the gospel on their lives. And yes, we share heartaches and happy events too. This morning one woman, whose beloved and brilliant husband is suffering from dementia, was struck by Jesus saying, "WHEN they persecute you…," not "IF…" It pointed her to the necessity of enduring the struggle and challenges with hope. Another talked about the "male spirituality" which had led to the Opening Prayer including the words "abasement of your Son," something she thought a woman would have written as "the glory of your Son." We ended, as always, with prayer that came from hearts tuned to kinship — connection, relationship, compassion — something women bring to our church and the world.

I appreciate Ms. Tunzi's research and wish her well!

SYLVIA DECK,
Santa Cruz, California

***

Advertisement

Ten Commandments hypocrisy

Michael Sean Winters misses the point of the debate surrounding the mandated posting of the Ten Commandments in Louisiana schools (ncronline.org, July 3, 2024). He argues on the side of the angels that we need a better relationship between the political and religious. Of course we do! However, the current push to post the Commandments is driven by the same fundamentalists and Christian nationalists that MSW has previously pilloried in the Reporter. Additionally, as no one in Louisiana has yet proposed shutting down Sunday businesses to keep the sabbath holy, censoring advertisements so they don't induce coveting, or smashing crucifixes and other graven images, this mandate is more performative than theological. Lastly, the same folks dedicated to posting the Commandments are deeply committed followers of a man who has broken most of them. As Jesus said in quoting Isaiah, "This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me."

THAT'S the problem.

ROBIN MCDOWELL
Atlanta, Georgia

***