Opinion

NCR Voices



Then-U.S. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., is seen on Capitol Hill in Washington on May 18, 2022. (CNS/Reuters/Tom Brenner)



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It is not every day that the National Catholic Reporter gets an interview with one of the most powerful politicians in America.

Camillo Barone's interview with former Speaker Nancy Pelosi, which appears online today, is the result of the sheer persistence of a sharp and resourceful reporter who saw an obvious big story for NCR. Week after week for three months, Camillo pinged Pelosi's staff seeking a sit-down. They never said no, until they finally said yes, two days before the interview.

Related: NCR interview: Nancy Pelosi criticizes Pope Francis over China pact

Camillo is a supremely talented, multilingual journalist, born and raised in Italy, and a product of the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism in New York City. In addition to relentlessly pursuing an interview, Camillo did what any good reporter does and cited his Italian Catholic connection when he sought to speak with Pelosi on the release of her memoir, *The Art of Power*.



Former Speaker Nancy Pelosi and NCR staff reporter Camillo Barone (NCR photo/James V. Grimaldi)

For NCR readers, Pelosi is a figure of great interest, the most prominent Catholic politician in the United States after President Joe Biden. (NCR named Pelosi its newsmaker of the year in 2019.) Her battles with bishops — and disagreement with the pope she discussed with Camillo — are matters of intrigue. And her Catholic faith is central to her life. Her detractors find her Catholicism dissonant with much of her politics, but to Pelosi it is all perfectly consistent.

Camillo grew up in Campobasso, about 40 miles away from Fornelli, Italy, where Pelosi's mother was born in 1909. Pelosi visited Fornelli two years ago. When Camillo mentioned this connection as an icebreaker when he arrived in her office in the Longworth House Office Building on Dec. 6., her eyes lit up — and then she opened up for our readers.

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