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.

Mangione family

Brian Fraga's report on the family history of Luigi Mangione was perfect (ncronline.org, Dec. 10, 2024). I commend Fraga for not taking either of these

positions:

1) Mangione had the right to shoot Thomphson.

OR

2) Mangione and his family are guilty and shamed.

I was interested to read about the dedication of this young man's family to Catholic life: we thank them for all their service as we pray for the widow and family of Brian Thompson. In reading the story of Luigi's life and family we are reminded of the essential vulnerability we all have. Luigi perceived that he could act on behalf of the oppressed by shooting someone who represented untold suffering. What sparked the dark turn from community social action to individual violence we may yet discover. Whatever the case, no one is invulnerable to the darkness.

This event reveals the hopelessness Americans feel as the wealth produced from their labor travels to the millionaires and health services are held captive by insurers. It is scandalous usury, and it oppresses us in much the same way as interest rates and school tuition.

This article provided a space to recall we owe Luigi's family a great deal, and we feel the profound grief for the loss of a young executive's life who was socialized in a capitalist system that directs all efforts to profit and transaction, objectifies human beings and is at the heart of all of violence.

DR. THERESE CRAIONE BERTSCH
New York, New York

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Religious freedom

Michael Sean Winter's article on the USCCB's amicus brief in *United States vs. Skrmetti* supports my impression of the religious freedom argument as a fallback position to change all the social progress which we have made over the past half century (ncronline.org, Dec. 4, 2024). Many on the self-perceived losing side are trying to reverse that progress by claiming their own religious freedom has been negatively impacted. The fact that these changes have not in the least affected anyone's right to believe what they wish on these or any other social issues doesn't seem to matter.

Gender dysphoria is a medical condition which, like all medical issues, needs to be acted upon by the individual, or in the case of minors, by their parents or guardians with the input and counsel of medical professionals. Just as it is not the province of the state to interfere in personal medical decisions the lack of expertise in this area by politicians or prelates can lead to unnecessary morbidity and could even lead to self-inflicted mortality.

As our culture evolves there are many actors who would rather our society turn retrograde and re-live an era wherein any individual's rights were subject to the caprice of a dominant group. We have emerged from that backward culture into one in which we recognize all people are equal and have responsibility for themselves, not rights which could otherwise be subject to others' definition or denial. Arguing religious freedom as an excuse to perpetuate oppression demeans those who are only exercising their own freedom, religious or otherwise, as guaranteed in law and diminishes the free exercise of those same and other rights by everyone, including

those who argue their own religious freedom supersedes other's rights.

CHARLES A LE GUERN
Granger, Indiana

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Angry Advent

Rebecca Bratten Weiss’s article, 'A case for an angry Advent', is 100% absolutely on point (ncronline.org, Dec. 19, 2024)! She expressed exactly what I (as well as my family, friends and colleagues) was experiencing during Advent and now Christmas. Thank you for this insight.

An angry God may be threatening to the wealthy and the oppressors. But for the oppressed, and for those who work for justice, an angry God is a defender.

SUEANN JERAL

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