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.

Pope Francis gave many of us hope that Catholicism could be something more than a weapon in the hands of the powerful. He wasn't perfect, but he spoke plainly against nationalism, xenophobia and the perversion of faith into political theater.

Now, with his death, I’m terrified we’ll see the return of a papacy too timid, or too complicit, to name injustice.

I want a pope who will stand where Francis stood. A pope who will not only condemn cruelty, but call out those who profit from it. I want a pope who will say, clearly and without euphemism, that the anti-immigrant, anti-poor, anti-mercy policies of the Trump administration are not Christian. And I want him to say that J.D. Vance's cherry-picked Catholicism, stripped of solidarity, dripping with authoritarianism, is not doctrine. It's a distortion.

Please keep pushing the Church to be brave. Keep reminding them that silence in the face of injustice isn’t neutral, it’s betrayal.

MORIAH NESSMITH
Linden, New Jersey

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Pope Francis lived an extraordinary life, rising from a modest family of Italian descent in Argentina, spending considerable time as a pastor in dispossessed neighbourhoods of Buenos Aires, eventually rising to Archbishop and Cardinal, and then at age 76, elected Pope, a surprise to many.

As Pope he chose Francis as his name after St. Francis of Assisi, the protector of the poor and less fortunate. For those of us who consider ourselves social justice Catholics, we could not have had a better Pope: he stood up for the poor, for immigrants, for those on the margins of society; lived in modest quarters at the

Vatican; rode in a small Ford Focus popemobile; met thousands of ordinary people all over the world; took trips to places like South Sudan and Congo to try to broker peace during endless wars.

Some progressive Catholics on the left, like me, would have liked his reforms to go even further. Yet he reigned in the ultraconservatives who would take the Church back to the times before Vatican II — in 12 short years, he has made an indelible, positive impact on the Church and the world.

As a graduate of Marquette University, a Catholic, Jesuit institution that inspired in me a life of service to the most marginalized in Africa, I applaud the best Pope of my lifetime. May his reforms, character and humility be an example for a Catholic church that can be even better, more inclusive, and a beacon of social justice to the world.

SHAUN SKELTON
Kampala, Uganda

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I love the editorial "Farewell to a Pope of Sacramentality" (NCR, April 21, 2025)

The death of Pope Francis has left me feeling spiritually and emotionally crushed so this will probably be the last piece I read about Francis for some time, and I think I chose very well.

Please pray for the world's Catholic LGBTQI community. I am among the many who expect to now face abandonment.

JEFFREY JONES
Hamburg, New York

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I'll keep it simple …

He gave me hope.

RICHARD CRANK
Topeka, Kansas

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