Opinion
NCR Voices



A 2012 photo shows a window at the entrance to the building housing The Guardian newspaper in London. (Wikimedia Commons/Bryantbob)



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The news business is changing rapidly. Many news outlets are in trouble and local news is collapsing around the country. Change is necessary to survive. The Washington Post is offering buyouts to reshuffle the staff. The Los Angeles Times is planning to go public to raise capital to keep the paper afloat amid declining circulation.

The National Catholic Reporter is changing, too. Standing still is not an option and assuming that what worked in the past will work in the future is not sustainable. In the past nine months, we have made our journalism more relevant, urgent, necessary and vital to our readers interested in the Catholic Church and the world and how the two intersect.

We are covering the big stories — the death of Pope Francis and the election of Pope Leo XIV — with an increased intensity, with live blogs, long features and breaking news. We are bolstering this work with thorough social media coverage and sharing our insights on national and international news.

More than ever, NCR jumps on the news to find out how the policies of the Trump administration affect everyday Catholics, particularly immigrants who have been targeted by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

To ramp up our coverage, we have increasingly collaborated with journalism organizations around the country, including KFF Health News, Mother Jones, Indian Country Today, Black Catholic Messenger and others.



Garrett Shanley wrote for NCR about Catholic priests being barred from ministering at Alligator Alcatraz. (Courtesy of Garrett Shanley)

When we heard that the archbishop of Miami was complaining that his diocesan priests could not get into Alligator Alcatraz, the state-run ICE detention facility in the Florida Everglades, I began looking for a reporter in Florida.

After more years in the business than I would like to admit, I have a lot of friends in key places. Through some digging, I realized my old friend Ted Bridis, formerly of the Associated Press, was teaching at the University of Florida and running an operation called Fresh Take Florida, a student-fed news operation that follows the Missouri Method of learn-by-doing innovated more than 100 years ago at the University of Missouri Journalism School. Ted previously ran the award-winning investigative unit in AP's Washington bureau.

Ted connected me with a young reporter named Garrett Shanley, who had just finished an internship for the Miami Herald. He was from nearby Broward County,

but was living five minutes away from the pastoral center for the Miami Archdiocese. He drove down to the chancery and interviewed Bishop Thomas Wenski.

Shanley produced a solid news story about Catholic priests being barred from tending the flock, meeting with migrants and saying Mass at Alligator Alcatraz.

Among our most prominent partnerships is with The Guardian, the global news organization based in the United Kingdom and founded in 1821 in Manchester, England.

The Guardian approached National Catholic Reporter because it was interested in collaborating on its series The Reckoning, about the secondary effects of the priest sexual abuse scandal, and eager to see The Guardian's articles appear in NCR, which is widely read by the Holy See. And of course, Pope Leo is a known, longtime reader of NCR.

We've published several Guardian articles, including one about a high-profile sexual abuse case involving the Jesuits that is in litigation in Louisiana.



Molly Castle Work wrote for NCR on how U.S. bishops were responding to President Donald Trump's mass deportation efforts. (Courtesy of Molly Castle Work)

Collaboration among nonprofit news organizations has been a trend for more than a decade and they often result in award-winning coverage. NCR has also made contact with top journalists running student programs in Indiana, Florida, Maryland, Massachusetts and New York to discuss possible collaborations.

Our story by Molly Castle Work is the product of one such contact. A recent graduate of the Philip Merrill School of Journalism at the University of Maryland, Castle Work came highly recommended by her journalism professor. We asked her to report a story on how bishops across the nation were responding to President Donald Trump's mass deportation efforts.

These efforts to collaborate with other journalists and freelancers allow our dedicated staff to work on longer enterprise and investigative pieces. This helps them and NCR meet our goal of writing stories that highlight problems that need exposing. This is the kind of journalism that can make our church more transparent and accountable.

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