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.

Movie nuns

Thanks to Rebecca Brattan for her article "The many faces of the movie nun" (NCR, Aug. 30, 2025). As a former sister myself, it is either amusing or irritating to see the

way nuns are often portrayed in films, either as naive, childish innocents or sour, joyless, kill-joys! To her list I would add "Heaven Knows Mr. Allison" with Debrah Kerr, and "The Nun's Story" with Audrey Hepburn. "Dead Man Walking" with Susan Sarandon as Sr. Helen Prejean presented the truest portrait of nuns in our time. My novel, "Toward That Which Is Beautiful", tells the story of a young American sister serving in the Altiplano of Peru, and was a second-place winner in the CMA Awards in Fiction. Sisters have been shining lights of the Church all over the world. We owe them respect and gratitude.

MARIAN O'SHEA WERNICKE
San Diego, California

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Leo and Durbin

Although I am not pleased that any group of Catholics would see the papacy through a partisan lens I am not surprised given our politics within and outside the church. Mr. Winters' essay (NCR, Oct. 3, 2025) concerning Pope Leo's reaction to Cardinal Cupich's decision to award Senator Durbin for his lifetime of public service demonstrated that the mantle of pro-life can not be limited to one politically galvanic issue.

Our church needs to address the spectrum of pro-life issues including humane treatment of immigrants, climate change, access to affordable healthcare, access to affordable food, quality education, etc. The spectrum is wide and deep and abortion

is only one view of the entire landscape of genuinely pro-life issues. Leo's remark that called out the pro-capital punishment crowd who claim the mantle of pro-life are nothing more than hypocrites.

We have a gift in that we have not only a pope who is fluent in English and is able to pontificate in our language, but a pope who is also an American Citizen from the heartland of our country who understands our politics and our polarity. He needs to influence our USCCB to broaden their focus on the totality of pro-life issues rather than just one which has proven popular with certain segments of the population.

CHARLES LE GUERN
Granger, Indiana

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Hamas' supposed responsibility

I have read the articles on the editorial page in August on Gaza with appreciation and agreement (NCR, Aug. 2, 2025 and Aug. 24, 2025). The lengthy editorials were well written, properly nuanced, and grounded in sound Catholic social/moral teachings. I was really impressed and pleased.

Michael Sean Winters' piece on moral responsibility was not the same quality (NCR, Aug. 27, 2025). In fact, I wondered if you didn't include it as a response to Israeli media watchdogs who had accused you of being 'antisemitic'. It seemed cribbed from Zionist propaganda.

He blames Palestinian political leaders for rejecting possibilities of peace, seeming to be blind that Israel started bombing during the ceasefire or that Israel bombed another sovereign country, Qatar, where and when peace talks were to take place.

Winters writes that "Hamas bears a moral responsibility for restarting the war". Why doesn't he say that Israel bears responsibility for every bomb, missile and drone it has used? Or that Israel alone denies food and medical care to all the people of Gaza. That Israel, by its own statements, intends to wipe out all the people of Gaza.

The problem is not that two people desire control over the same land. Israel wants a Jewish state with second class rights for Arabs in Israel and no sovereign area for Palestinians. Palestinian leaders will not compromise their existence away, which is the condition that Israel demands.

DAVID WALRATH
Santa Rosa, California

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