Opinion
Letters to the Editor



by NCR Staff

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Following are NCR reader responses to NCR reporter Brian Fraga's story "Boston Archdiocese wants ICE message gone from parish's outdoor Nativity scene."

"Politics" in sacred space

Your recent coverage of the controversy surrounding the "ICE was here" sign placed over an empty manger outside a Boston parish raises important questions about the

boundaries between political witness and sacred space (NCR, Dec. 8, 2025). But if the concern is that political messages shouldn't be placed near symbols of our faith, then surely a more urgent problem is the longstanding and widespread practice of placing national flags inside Catholic sanctuaries—sometimes immediately adjacent to the tabernacle that contains the sacramental presence of the Body of Christ.

The tabernacle is not just a symbol. It is, in Catholic belief, the real presence of Christ. The sanctuary is a sacred space reserved for worship of God, not for displays of secular power. A national flag—even one meant to express gratitude for religious freedom—represents a political entity, a government. Its placement in the sanctuary risks conflating religious and national identity, suggesting that allegiance to the state somehow shares space with our allegiance to Christ. That is not patriotism. It borders on idolatry.

By contrast, the nativity protest is outside the church building, temporary, and clearly intended to raise a moral question about immigration policy. You may agree or disagree with its message or tone. But it does not claim sacred status. A flag inside the sanctuary, placed permanently next to the altar or the tabernacle, sends a much more confusing message about whom we worship and why.

If we are serious about protecting the integrity of sacred space, we should start where the stakes are highest: with what we allow to stand beside the Eucharist.

FERNANDO LAGUARDA
Washington, D.C.

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Holy Family were refugees

You would think that the Archdiocese of Boston would know the story of Jesus' birth and childhood – that the Holy Family was poor and forced to be refugees making the Nativity by St. Susanna most appropriate.

Instead of asking them to remove the sign, the Archdiocese should have every church within its jurisdiction replace the Nativity with an "ICE was here" sign...

Now, what a great Catholic statement that would make!

PAUL JONES
Miami, Florida

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Everything is "political"

I wish the bishops would distinguish between "partisan politics" and "immoral", which would make ICE actions and the Trump administration's actions easier to comment on and react to. Almost everything we do can be considered as a "political" action; what ICE and the current administration are doing is certainly not for the "common good". I am not against ICE or Trump, I don’t "hate" either, I just consider them immoral.

MARY JANE SCHUTZIUS
Florissant, MO

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This story appears in the **Immigration and the Church** feature series. View the full series.