Opinion
NCR Voices



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Over the past few weeks, as I prepared to take on the executive editor role at NCR, I connected with dozens of people from the NCR community — staff, board members, benefactors and readers. A few trends quickly emerged.

First, a great deal of love exists for NCR, particularly for its commitment to publishing independent, thoughtful journalism about the Catholic Church. Hundreds of thousands of readers rely on NCR each month for important news and analysis and I'm eager to hear how we can continue to serve them. NCR's reporters — Camillo Barone, Brian Fraga and Brian Roewe — and contributors consistently deliver thought-provoking, well-sourced articles about a wide range of issues related to the church, and our readers are responding.

Next, there is genuine excitement about the election of the first American pope, Leo XIV. With the closing of the Jubilee Year and meeting of cardinals this week in Rome, Leo is set to launch his pontificate in earnest, and NCR's Vatican correspondent, Justin McLellan, and the entire team at NCR stands ready to help make sense of where Leo intends to lead the church.



Screenshot of the NCRonline.org homepage on Jan. 6, 2026 (NCR screenshot)

Finally, I am buoyed by the optimism I've heard about NCR's future, even while recognizing the challenges ahead. We continue to set records in terms of readership, our reporting and analysis stand out for their thoroughness and attention to detail and NCR's advancement team will soon announce major news about the solid financial footing being prepared for the organization's future.

While NCR must continue to adapt to changes in technology and prepare to confront the seemingly endless challenges facing nonprofit journalism, the entire business and editorial teams are committed to discovering the most efficient and productive ways to report and deliver the news.

During my career — first as a reporter at The Boston Globe's Catholic site Crux, then at the Jesuit-run America Media and as the author of *Hidden Mercy*, a book about the church's response to HIV and AIDS in the 1980s and '90s — I've had the opportunity to witness firsthand how the church affects important public policy debates, the

havoc it causes when it fails to live up to its own ideals and the intimate role it plays during the highs and lows in the lives of countless everyday believers. Deeply understanding this institution is essential for so many, and that's why I am excited to be leading NCR at this unique moment in our church and the world.

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In the weeks and months ahead, NCR's team will consider a wide range of issues important to Catholics and anyone interested in the church: Where will Pope Leo lead the church? How are U.S. Catholics standing up to the threat of authoritarianism — or enabling it? How are technological leaps, such as the rise of AI, affecting the most marginalized in society? Are church leaders embracing synodality and might that lead to a more inclusive church? How are young people, still confronting the challenges of coming of age during a global pandemic, changing the church?

As we do, I look forward to hearing from the NCR community, with your questions about the church, your ideas for how we cover the church and your encouragement for our team as we take on this important work. In the meantime, thank you for being a vibrant part of this mission.

Related: NCR names Michael O'Loughlin as executive editor