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.

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Cardinal Tobin

Thank God for leaders who are willing and able to, as Cardinal Tobin states, "tell the truth about what is happening and honor those whose lives are upended" (NCR, Jan.

26, 2026). The importance of naming the reality, which is different from controlling the narrative, cannot be overstated. To quote our Prime Minister, Mark Carney when speaking of all that Canada has to offer the world, "And we have something else. We have a recognition of what's happening and a determination to act accordingly. We understand that this rupture calls for more than adaptation. It calls for honesty about the world as it is. We are taking the sign out of the window." We are saying NO.

**LORI DEXTER**
**Alberta, Canada**

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Bishops' response

It is heartening that a small number of U.S. Catholic bishops have spoken publicly in a distinctly Gospel-centered, human-dignity register — prayer, peace, the image of God, restraint and rights — rather than mirroring the administration's framing in Minnesota (NCR, Jan. 26, 2026).

But the larger fact is sobering. Out of hundreds of active and retired U.S. bishops, only a handful of voices have been clearly heard.  In a Church that claims a public moral mission, that silence is not a minor omission.  It shapes what Catholics believe is optional, what suffering counts and which neighbors are safe to ignore.

When fear is stoked, when rhetoric hardens and when force becomes routine, leaders do not protect unity by withholding moral clarity.  They protect comfort. So a hard question hangs in the air:  is this quiet prudence, fear of backlash, institutional self-preservation or a deeper failure to speak when the moment demands it?

The Church can still choose. But the window for credible witness closes quickly.

**BILL MOREHEAD**
**Madison, Wisconsin**

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Christian witness

Reading Dan Horan's article "Willful ignorance is a sin that demands repentance" led me right away to recall the recent address of Canada's PM, Mark Carney, to the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos, Switzerland (NCR, Jan. 22. 2026). I found resonance in at least two areas: Carney quoted Czech dissident Václav Havel asking the simple question, "how did the communist system sustain itself?" Havel's answer concluded "through the participation of ordinary people in rituals they privately know to be false." Havel called this "living within a lie." The resonance here with Dan's article is, if we willfully keep ignorant about the roots of what is happening around us, we choose to live within a lie. Second, Carney stated that "'Nostalgia is not a strategy," echoing head-on Horan's pointing out the nostalgic rhetoric of political and religious leaders. Carney calls to action: "a recognition of what is happening and a determination to act accordingly." The phrase to "pray with the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other" attributed to Karl Barth, a prominent Protestant theologian, does away with remaining ignorant and nostalgic. Educating ourselves about what is happening all around us and why becomes a spiritual discipline!

**YVONNE DeBRUIN**
**Columbia, Marylan**

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