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.

Charlotte debacle

The NCR coverage of the Latin Mass flap initiated by Bishop Michael Martin in North Carolina comes at a time when I have just finished reading John L. Allen Jr.'s "The

Future Church" (NCR, Feb. 13 2026). The late Mr. Allen's cogent analysis of current and future changes in the Church provide an important perspective on the kerfuffle surrounding the Latin Mass.

Allen comments on the demographic shifts around the globe that will influence the distribution of the Catholic faithful. He observes the increasing role of evangelical Catholics and the increased reliance on Catholic laity, men and women, in both Church administration and liturgy.

With that future church as the underpinning for discussion, it would appear that the bishops should remember their role as the successors to the fisherman apostles. The bishops should find ways of casting a larger net to serve as many Catholic laypeople as possible. They should seek inclusion not exclusion. The Latin Mass is not theological dogma. Liturgy should reflect, in large part, the people it serves. If North Carolina Catholics want more Latin Masses , it should be provided to them.

Contrast the autocratic actions of Martin with the words of Archbishop Ronald Hicks. One of the first public statements of Hicks was, "I'm called here to be a pastor. I'm called here to be a shepherd." To me, those words resonate; a tale of two cities and a tale of two bishops, indeed.

KEVIN LOUGHLIN
Edgartown, Massachusetts

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Villanova bishops training

Thank you for your account of the training provided to fourteen, mostly new, bishops by Villanova University (NCR, Jan. 6, 2026). Central to the account was the collaborative nature of the training. Late in the article Bishop Christopher Cooke of Philadelphia is cited as saying that the training serves as a model for the synodal church. His words were followed by the training director Matthew Manion's observation, "They were all working together to figure out how to do the role as best they can." Yes, our new bishops are showing all of us, the People of God, how to move forward – together, synodally.

THOMAS CAFFREY
New York, New York

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Don't demand civility from Democrats

I don't understand how Michael Sean Winters could come to the conclusion in his column "Politics as pigsty: Demise in civility drags down recent House hearing" that the problem with the Democrats on the House panel questioning Pam Bondi "need to conduct themselves in such a way as to convince disaffected Americans that politics is not a pigsty" (NCR, Feb. 16, 2026). Those Representatives have Republican colleagues who could take a strong stance against the leader of their party and demand the Attorney General stop lying. I also don't see why it is only Democrats who "need to create and campaign on a new social contract for Americans, one that undoes the harm neoliberal economics has wrought on the American people." Republican politicians and lobbyists were right there along with Democratic ones in building a neoliberal order that harmed the working class, until they decided they wanted fascism instead.

Americans need better political leaders and an economic system that doesn't allow for such vast inequality, but it does no good to bemoan civility while obscuring the ongoing role that Republican officials have played in wrecking the country.

ANNE DLUGOSZ
Buffalo, New York

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