Opinion
Letters to the Editor



by NCR Staff

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

March 6, 2026
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

Following are NCR reader responses to recent news articles, opinion columns and theological essays with letters that have been edited for length and clarity.

St. John's faculty union

As a former union president and a current employee of the AFT, and more importantly as a Catholic, I find St. John’s University’s decision to abandon

recognition of its faculty union profoundly inconsistent with the Church's moral teaching (NCR, Feb. 23, 2026).

For more than a century, Catholic social doctrine has affirmed the dignity of workers and their right to organize. Pope Leo XIII taught clearly that workers must be free to form associations to defend their interests. This is even in the Catechism as a moral mandate grounded in human dignity. More recently, Pope Francis repeatedly affirmed that unions are essential defenders of justice in the workplace and a necessary counterbalance to concentrated institutional power.

To invoke Catholic identity while dismantling a faculty union is not institutional neutrality, it is a contradiction. A university that claims a Catholic mission cannot selectively apply Catholic teaching only when convenient. The tradition is clear: solidarity is not a slogan; it is a responsibility.

Faculty working conditions are student learning conditions. Undermining collective bargaining weakens the very community Catholic education claims to serve. When an institution benefits from the moral authority of the Church yet rejects the Church's consistent defense of labor rights, it risks reducing Catholic identity to branding rather than witness.

As someone who has spent years helping workers organize —- including right here in Kansas City — I know unions are not obstacles to mission; they are expressions of it. If Catholic institutions expect moral credibility, they must practice the justice they teach.

JASON ROBERTS
Liberty, Missouri

***



Bishops editorial

The editors have it almost right in the editorial "Bishops of the United States, history has its eyes on you" (NCR, Feb. 18, 2026). They failed to note that Catholics in the U.S. and around the world have their eyes on the bishops, and we can tell the difference between prelates who meet the moment in the light of the Gospel and those bishops who acquiesce to interests who would not have them recognize the dignity of immigrants or the subsidies given to the wealthy in the Big Beautiful Bill. What the faithful do not have is an easy way of praising, naming and shaming their bishops. In the absence of that, we might all try to meet our responsibility by encouraging those who speak up and letting those who don't know that they are noticed. And a place to start is in our own dioceses.

STEPHEN LAMMERS
Nazareth, Pennsylvania

***

Advertisement

Bishops' change in tone

I doubt I am alone in my view, described cogently by Fr. Reese, that the bishop's milquetoast confrontation with Trump is long in coming (NCR, Feb. 27, 2026). The USCCB has historically failed to confront policies of Republican presidencies even

when church teachings to the contrary were self-evident. In contrast the bishops seemed to believe the only politicians who were safe to criticize were Democrats.

If the USCCB had not become so political since the early part of this century and spoken even handedly concerning policies which they believe were malignant their credibility would have been much enhanced. However, the reaction of the people in the pews should be enthrallment that our shepherds are finally confronting the wolves and not a reaction akin to a collective shrug voicing the question "where were you when we needed you?"

CHARLES LE GUERN
Mount Holly, North Carolina

***