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.

Mental health

I believe most suicides are attempted by people who are either chronically mentally ill or facing an acute mental crisis. Jack Kiyonaga's story alludes to the fact that

criminal penalties for suicide have not been customary but that decriminalizing suicide remains controversial among Catholics (NCR, May 12, 2026).

Carol Zimmerman's column highlights how some clerics have failed to comfort those who were mourning their family members who committed suicide (NCR, May 13, 2026). The church needs to be able to provide assurances that suicide was the act of someone who was at the end of their own ability to cope with their circumstances. Judgement is in the hands of God, not the clergy whose responsibility is to care for the living.

CHARLES LE GUERN
Mount Holly, North Carolina

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Jesus and war

With respect to Dr. Karen Park and her overall message, I submit we can identify the key difference between Pete Hegseth and Pope Leo XIV with much less scholarly gymnastics (from Augustine or others) by hearing Jesus of Nazareth (NCR, April 8, 2026).

First, we must acknowledge that Jesus's words have primacy over any words before or since. As written in Hebrews: "In times past, God spoke in partial and various ways to our ancestors through the prophets; in these last days, he spoke to us through a son, whom he made heir of all things. ...".

Then we can confidently refer to the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus says several times "You have heard it said … but I tell you … " and he clarifies what was said imperfectly or incompletely in the past.

The case in point is Jesus' words: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust."

We do not have to justify every text of the Old Testament as though it represented God's kingdom perfectly. If that were the case, a Messiah would never have been needed.

Anyone claiming to follow Jesus (and trying to justify war) would, it would seem, have to justify themselves from the words of Jesus.

(Deacon) JAMES CARNEY
Raymond, Washington

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Advertisement

The Society of St. Pius X

It seems as though every effort has been made to dialogue and reason with the recalcitrant leaders of the Society of Pius X in its push to consecrate bishops without the approval of Rome (NCR, May 13, 2026).

Would it be such a terrible thing for members of this group to suffer excommunication and endure a "time out" in order to rethink their passion for the pre-conciliar mass and rejection of Vatican II teachings?

The building blocks for Pope Leo XIV's upcoming decision in this matter were laid long ago by church fathers in council back in the 1960's. The majority of bishops present agreed then and the majority of bishops and the "people of God" agree now. Letting the Society of St. Pius X go its own stubborn way is probably in the best interests of all concerned.

NANCY McGUNAGLE
Kalispell, Montana

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