

Members of the media attend Mass at St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church June 16, 2026, during the Catholic Media Conference in Atlantic City, New Jersey. (OSV News photo/Bob Roller)

by NCR Staff

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The National Catholic Reporter (NCR) and Global Sisters Report (GSR) received a combined 45 honors at the 2026 Catholic Media Awards, highlighting the organizations' strengths in reporting, commentary, investigative journalism, environmental coverage, social justice reporting and digital media.

Of the total awards, NCR earned 31 recognitions while GSR received 14. The awards, presented annually by the Catholic Media Association, recognize excellence in Catholic journalism across print, digital, multimedia and social media platforms. This year's top winners were announced June 19 during the conference's closing dinner after its June 16-19 gathering in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

Among the top individual honors, NCR environment correspondent Brian Roewe won first place in the English-language Writer of the Year category. NCR staff reporter Camillo Barone placed second and NCR staff reporter Brian Fraga received an honorable mention.

Judges praised Roewe's environmental reporting for its depth, accessibility and ability to connect faith and ecological concerns. Barone was recognized for his versatility and detailed reporting on a range of complex and timely issues.

NCR also earned second place for Best Newspaper — National/Wire Service.

"Each day, talented journalists at National Catholic Reporter work hard to bring our readers a compelling mix of stories that help make sense of what's happening in the world and the church, and to provide hope and offer insight into what makes Catholicism so important to so many," said Michael J. O'Loughlin, NCR's executive editor. "It's rewarding to the entire team to see so much of this work recognized by our colleagues at Catholic Media Association."

Several of the organization's major news projects received top honors. Barone's reporting on immigration won first place in Best Coverage — Immigration for "The Gospel From Exile: A Deported Migrant's Story," produced with Yolanda Chavez. Barone also received a third-place Knights of Columbus Blessed Michael McGivney Award for his three-part series on survivors of a mass shooting at Annunciation Catholic School.

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Coverage of international and Vatican affairs also featured prominently among the awards. NCR Vatican correspondent Justin McLellan won first place for Best Coverage — Papal Trips for his report on Pope Leo XIV's visit to the Middle East. Judges described the article as informative, nuanced and engaging, noting its effective use of firsthand reporting and interviews.

Fraga also shared in a first-place award for Best Coverage — Political Issues for NCR's reporting on the impact of U.S. foreign aid cuts on Catholic Relief Services, working with Roewe, Katie Collins Scott and the NCR editorial staff. Fraga additionally earned second place in Best Investigative News Writing with McLellan for their exclusive report examining allegations surrounding a prominent critic of Pope Leo XIV.

He was also part of the team that received first place in Best Reporting of Social Justice Issues — Dignity and Rights of the Workers for a series of articles with NCR's columnist Michael Sean Winters and David Kovacs addressing labor rights at Loyola Marymount University.

Investigative journalism remained a strong area for NCR. Veteran journalist Jason Berry won first place in Best Investigative News Writing and first place in the Gerard E. Sherry Award category for his reporting on the New Orleans Archdiocese bankruptcy and its impact on abuse survivors. Additional investigative honors went to Ryan Di Corpo, whose reporting on religious liberty issues and clergy abuse-related topics received multiple awards.

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Editorial writing also garnered recognition. NCR's editorial staff won first place for "Pope Leo Delivers Breathtakingly Bold Salvo on Wealth, Elitism and Poverty" and second place for "For Pope Francis, Beauty Was Revolutionary. It Was the Face of God."

Environmental and social justice reporting represented another major area of success. Roewe contributed to award-winning coverage of climate change, environmental policy and Catholic responses to ecological challenges. A series covering the U.N. climate conference COP30 in Kenya by GSR Africa correspondent Doreen Ajiambo, Roewe and Eduardo Campos Lima earned first place for Best News

Writing Series — International Event.

News editor Carol Zimmermann won second place in the Best Regular Column — General Commentary category for her columns including: "5 Years after COVID-19: What We Can't Shake."

For its conclave coverage, NCR's article "The first American pope? This cardinal has the best chance of making history in this conclave" won second place in the category Hot Topic — Papal Conclave And The Election Of Pope Leo The XIV. The article was part of a series on the 2025 conclave curated by three NCR staff writers and graphic designer Dan DeLorenzo.

Global Sisters Report received honors across a broad range of categories, reflecting its international focus on women religious and social justice. International correspondent Chris Herlinger won first place for Best News Writing One Shot — International Event for his report on conditions in the West Bank amid ongoing conflict. Judges commended the article for vividly conveying the realities faced by local residents.

"It is immensely gratifying for CMA to recognize the range of stories that GSR reports on behalf of Catholic sisters — especially our 'Out of the Shadows' series, which was one of our most compelling and prolific bodies of work yet," said Soli Salgado, editor of Global Sisters Report. "These honors motivate us to continue to identify and report on the important work of sisters around the world, a job that GSR is uniquely positioned to do."

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GSR also received first place for Best Reporting on Priesthood, Religious Life or Diaconate — Series for "Out of the Shadows: Confronting Violence Against Women ," an ongoing series by the GSR staff. Herlinger's story on Combini Missionary Sisters in the Holy Land also won a second place and a third place in two distinct awards, namely best news writing on an international event and best reporting on priesthood, religious life or diaconate. National correspondent Dan Stockman and Herlinger earned recognition for coverage related to Pope Francis and religious life. Additionally, in the category of a regular column related to art and culture, Herlinger won first place for a review in NCR of a collection of World War II memoirs published

by the Library of America.

In digital media, GSR's Instagram account, managed by multimedia and social editor Olivia Bardo, won first place for Best Social Media Account. Judges praised the account's global reach and engaging presentation of stories about women religious. Bardo also shared with Tracy L. Barnett a multimedia award for reporting on Colombia's Peace Community.

Additional honors included two awards for NCR's copy desk for best headline; first place for best national electronic newsletter to former environment editor Stephanie Clary for the EarthBeat Weekly newsletter; best photography award to former NCR executive editor James V. Grimaldi, and four awards for Spanish-language interviews published by GSR, including the interview "Human trafficking is a public health issue" to Sr. Anne Victory by Joanna Kozakiewicz translated by Magda Bennásar.

Former NCR Vatican correspondent and Georgetown University's Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life associate director Christopher White also received a third-place award in the book category for *Pope Leo XIV: Inside the Conclave and the Dawn of a New Papacy* published by Loyola Press.