

[Opinion](#)

[Letters to the Editor](#)



by NCR Staff

[View Author Profile](#)

[**Join the Conversation**](#)

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. [Learn more](#)

August 7, 2026

[Share on Bluesky](#)[Share on Facebook](#)[Share on Twitter](#)[Email to a friend](#)[Print](#)

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

Leo and synodality

I think that Rafael Luciani's article "Why Vatican II and synodality are the twin tasks of Leo's papacy" synthesizes and clarifies the mission of the church under the

leadership of Pope Leo XIV (NCR, [July 31, 2026](#)). Leo is a global man of vision, yet at the same time understands quite completely the past. In high school I read *Lumen Gentium* and my heart raced with joy. It is a beautiful understanding of what the church can and should be with the direction of the Holy Spirit, and with each of us participating. I said to one of my classmates that we too share the graces of the sacraments with each other.

We are a synodal church that desires to include all in dialogue. Leo doesn't falter in his earthly direction:

"He appears to stand at the intersection of two unfinished, yet ongoing processes: the reception of the Second Vatican Council and the implementation of synodality as articulated during Francis' pontificate. His challenge is to bring together the memory of the Council and the future of synodality. This is the context in which Leo's pontificate unfolds."

Jesus walks beside us as we transform the church into a fuller kingdom on earth.

With hope for a deeper synodal understanding of the church.

EILEEN QUINN KNIGHT
Chicago, Illinois



Illinois funeral restrictions

Reading the article about refusing same-day vigils and barring family eulogies, I ask one question: Where is the compassion for the family(NCR, [July 30, 2026](#))? This is the kind of rigidity that sends families out the door. This attitude, by a handful of bishops, is an exercise of power and patriarchy. "Father knows best," even if technically correct, is an exercise of misplaced authority and in some cases, a mean-spirited attempt at dominance.

As a professional Lay Minister who served as a Parish Director, I have been to hundreds of funerals. Every eulogy, good or less so, has one thing at its core: Love. Love is what our faith is all about. It is no sin to express it inelegantly. It is always of God, for God is love. Adhering to the letter of the law without compassion, mercy and understanding that love is what drives the eulogy, is a failure of the cleric to understand the true meaning of love.

Pope Francis spoke many times of mercy and welcoming. How sad that families, in their grief, will feel unwanted and unwelcome. Some people will not take kindly to these actions. More and more families are having funerals out of the church for a variety of reasons. Decisions such as these will only increase that trend.

JAN RUIDL
Oak Creek, Wisconsin

Civil religion

Mr. Winters makes a case for a "civil religion" (NCR, [July 16, 2026](#)) seemingly based upon an ethos which he believes is inculcated in our national character. I would believe that rather than having a religious foundation our ethos is one of recognition of equality and fairness having nothing to do with any religious precepts but are in fact intrinsic to the American character. One is free to believe that those virtues are handed down to our culture via religious experiences. However, I believe we learned, as a people, that regardless of any religious inheritance that some would like to entertain as fundamental to our history, our secular culture also promotes those same virtues.

We need to reassert the fact that as a secular republic we have beliefs concerning right from wrong and these are transcendental. It might be comforting for many to believe in the influence of religion in our long and storied history but in the final

analysis our passion for justice and our respect for one another do not rest exclusively upon religious teachings. The character of the individual, whether religious or atheist, determines their responses to circumstances.

CHARLES LE GUERN
Mount Holly, North Carolina

Advertisement

Immigration enforcement

Tom Holman predicted "bloodshed" if people are told "not to comply with law enforcement" (NCR, [July 20, 2026](#)). Holman made these comments in reference to immigrants who died at the hands of immigration officials. But his framing suggests that the victims themselves are responsible for their own deaths.

The church has long rejected the vilification of law enforcement, but it also rejects the vilification of peaceful protesters who exercise their constitutional rights. To imply that those who raise moral concerns about immigration practices should "shut their mouth," as Holman put it, is to dismiss legitimate calls for accountability and human dignity.

Holman insists that ICE is merely enforcing laws enacted by Congress. But Catholic leaders such as Bishop Daniel García and Bishop Brendan Cahill remind us that the enforcement of any law must be carried out "in a humane manner and with respect for fundamental human rights, including the rights to life and due process." They call for "accountability, transparency, and justice," and for meaningful reforms to our immigration system.

(Fr.) MISAEL AVILA
Turlock, California
