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Dear Readers

Michael Sean Winters | Dec. 31, 2010 Distinctly Catholic

A Happy (or Prosperous, if you prefer) New Year to all my readers.

Distinctly Catholic is six months old. I am grateful too all my readers but especially to those of you like "Southern Catholic" and Michael Bindner who leave thoughtful, challenging comments. I encourage everyone to comment and I also encourage everyone to post your name. I make it a point to ignore comments from anonymous posters and recommend that everyone do the same. I do not respond to comments, believing that it is my job to say what I have to say in my original post and that the comments' section belongs to you, the readers, but I always read the comments by the end of the week and many of them provoke me to think twice about what I originally wrote. Thank you.

There have been some highlights this year. I am especially pleased with the "Q & A" segment. One of the dangers of blogs is that they become univocal, and making this blog a home for many voices helps avoid that danger. Originally, my aim in starting the "Q & A" was also to have some postings ready to go in advance. Alas, it takes twice as much work to coordinate five people as it does to just write one's own opinions, but the effort is worth it. Twice, I have turned to the young theologians who participated in the Fordham Conversation Project: These new voices are critical as, together, we discern the future of the Church. I was also especially pleased to have such luminaries as Archbishop Vincent Nichols, Newman biographer Father Ian Ker and Newman's successor Father Duffield, as well as Professors Pramuk and Komonchak commenting on the beatification of John Henry Newman. It has also been a privilege to have postings from the staff and bishops at the USCCB, whose voices are among the most thoughtful and earnest in our nation's contemporary political debates.

In the coming year, I hope to also do more reporting in this blog. NCR is one of the few venues for serious reporting about the Church in our culture. I stand in the shadows of my NCR colleagues who have done such a great job over the years covering often difficult but important stories. To cite only the most obvious example, if the whole Church had been as vigilant about clergy sex abuse as NCR was, the crisis might have been nipped in the bud earlier, and more children might have been protected sooner.

Distinctly Catholic will continue to provide links to other sites that have articles of interest to NCR readers, both inside the Beltway political articles that might escape attention outside the beltway, and outside the Beltway articles that should enter the discussion here in DC. As more and more newspapers cut back on their religion reporting, it is important to search and survey what is being written elsewhere, as well as to provide original content here at NCR. Both Church and culture can only flourish when people are engaged vigorously with the issues of the day.

A final note. My New Year will really begin on January 15 - the due date for the manuscript of my book. I have a couple of stories I will be working on then that will hopefully help make this blog even better. And, please, please, please, use the comments' section on this posting to tell me what you want to read here! Feedback is deeply appreciated.

So, Happy New Year to all, a New Year that will make NCR an even more essential contibutor to the debates that swirl in the halls of Congress and over coffee after Mass.

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