

Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (<https://www.ncronline.org>)

April 1, 2014 at 1:45pm

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## Which were NCR's most-read online stories in March?

by Pam Hackenmiller

NCR Today

Here's a rundown of the most-read stories on NCRonline.org for the month of March. The list is compiled with the help of Google Analytics. Miss any of these stories? Now's the time to get caught up.

5. "Burke warns against simplifying annulments, 'false mercy' " by Joshua J. McElwee, posted March 21. Cardinal Raymond Burke, head of the Vatican's highest court, warned against a simplification of the process for seeking annulments in the church in a lecture at The Catholic University of America. "It must be clear" that the annulment process "is not a mere matter of procedure but that the process is essentially connected with the doctrinal truth" of the church, he said.
4. "Church teaching must change on sexual morality, says German bishop" by Christa Pongratz-Lippitt, posted March 4. Bishop Stephan Ackermann of Trier, Germany, said his country's responses to the Vatican's questionnaire for the upcoming Synod of Bishops on the family showed "quite clearly" that for the majority of the faithful, the church's teaching on moral sexuality was "repressive" and "remote from life."
3. "Some Catholic leaders need to follow Pope Francis' lead" by John Gehring, posted March 1. This blog post on NCR Today drew more than 250 comments discussing the differences between certain U.S. hierarchs, including a priest who told a woman about to attend her mother's funeral Mass that he would not give her Communion because she was in a same-sex relationship, and Pope Francis.
2. "Francis marks anniversary with interview on sex abuse, women, contraception" by Joshua J. McElwee, posted March 5. About a week before he celebrated one year in office, Pope Francis gave an interview to the Italian daily *Corriere della Sera* in which he defended the church's handling of the sex abuse crisis, a defense that riled up readers.

1. "New 'religious' group just as deadly as the ones that preceded it" by Joan Chittister, posted March 19. In her monthly column, Chittister talked about a new order of people who say they are religious who publicly discriminate against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in the name of religious freedom. The column was shared by more than 2,300 people on Facebook.

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