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by NCR Staff

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October 4, 2019

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NCR readers are welcome to join the conversation and send us a letter to the editor. Below is a sampling of letters received in the month of August 2019. If you want to respond to an article published in NCR, follow the steps listed at the end of this post.

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I applaud every single word in the editorial, "[Cardinal Burke is a living symbol of a failed vision of church](#)," and I applaud NCR for insisting on using it's voice to speak truth to those who would just love to gain power and control over our church.

Cardinal Raymond Burke, and Timothy Busch, and their ilk, are so far away from Vatican II which sought to bring the Roman Catholic Church more in line with what Jesus actually taught, that it is astonishing.

Long live Pope Francis. Thank you, NCR.

## **MARY WUDTKE**

### **Chicago, Illinois**

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In your final paragraph, you imply a dichotomy between mercy and precepts, but both mercy and precepts are God's, entrusted to the church. The precepts allow us to determine with certainty when we have offended God and especially need his mercy, which is forgiveness as a means of reconciling us to him and sparing us from eternal death. Thus, mercy and the precepts are not opposites but rather joined completely.



You imply that we ought to accept the sins of others as part of our love for them, but surely as God loves us, he despises our sins, which is why we beg his pardon. Should we not do likewise and, as a work of mercy, admonish sinners not in spite of, but because of, our love for them and their eternal souls?

Finally, you imply that Cardinal Raymond Burke supports the "derision and banishment" of doubters and questioners. This is unsupported and markedly false, as the cardinal himself is a questioner who has been derided by your publication and

banished from curial posts. After publicly asking questions about *Amoris Laetitia* in a letter with five dubia (doubts), Burke was removed from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments and has been ridiculed by your publication in pieces like this one.

Perhaps you should first remove the beam from your own eye before unjustly criticizing others (Matthew 7:5). Such an enlightenment would enable you to engage in a true dialogue about the issues you claim to discuss.

## **NATHANIEL SCHETTER**

### **Skokie, Illinois**

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In your rather uncharitable editorial, you stated that Cardinal Raymond Burke represents a version of church that adheres to "rigid and unyielding boundaries of law."

Certainly you would agree that Jesus came among us to bear witness to the truth. Indeed, he revealed himself as the truth. In his divine nature, in his oneness with the father, he does not change -- he is the same yesterday, today and forever. The truth that Jesus teaches is therefore likewise immutable.

From this truth flow the moral doctrines taught by the church, guided by the Holy Spirit. When the church teaches us not to commit adultery or fornication, not to engage in homosexual relations, or not to kill the unborn or facilitate abortion in any way, she speaks to us the truth of Jesus Christ. The truth can certainly seem to us to be "rigid and unyielding," but this is precisely because it is immutable and not subject to the whims or rationalizations of a malformed conscience.

Our Holy Father has rightly called us to adopt a more "pastoral approach" toward those who feel outcast, neglected or confused. But this charitable accompaniment must lead to only one place -- to the truth of Jesus Christ. It would be grossly uncharitable (and perhaps sinful) for a priest or bishop, seeking "new ways of expressing the faith," to water down or violate the church's teachings in favor of a misguided sense of "mercy."

## **(Deacon) JOSEPH CINQUINO**

### **Catonsville, Maryland**

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In my humble knowledge, I'd like to point out to Cardinal Raymond Burke that Jesus did not institute a celibate clergy. In fact, as he well knows, Peter was married and was the first "pope" of the church, so celibacy is not an example of Jesus Christ intended for clergy.

While the last 1,000 years of church history required celibacy of clergy, he is aware many were and are not, and it was a reaction to nepotism and not some theological or spiritual principle. I hope the cardinal can educate himself on history and tradition.

## **MARK GOTVALD**

### **Pleasant Hill, California**

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I am a longtime admirer of Jesuit Fr. Thomas Reese. I consider him to be a bright and balanced church spokesperson. That is why I was astounded to see the conclusion to his article about [political divisions in the church as a threat to church unity](#).

After pointing out that the Catholic Church is almost equally divided among Trump supporters and those who oppose him, Reese concludes:

"Experienced moderators will be needed for such listening sessions. Undoubtedly, Democrats will say "The president should stop tweeting," while Republicans will say "The Democrats should stop trying to impeach the president." The moderator will need to constantly bring the group back to the question "What can we do to heal our country," not what the president or others should do."

I think he should have concluded with the clear implication of his own concluding statements "Christians must know that we are Christians by our love, rather than know that we are Catholics by our fights."

And he should have gone on to say that divisions in the Catholic Church are not a matter of tweets vs. impeachment. They are about the need for church leaders, including Reese, to call out and condemn the immoral, unchristian, criminal and unconstitutional behavior of this person, this president and this administration. Much of what Trump does and his followers support is contrary to the letter and spirit of the Gospels. What Catholics need to decide is whether they consider so many of his repugnant behavior and policies contrary to Catholic moral teaching.

## **TIM MANNELLO**

### **Williamsport, Pennsylvania**

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In reply to Jesuit Fr. Thomas Reese's article, as a one-time union leader and as an officer of the Oregon AFL-CIO executive board, I have experienced the labor movement at the apex of its power. Political leaders were selected not by party but by what they could do for the union. Republicans were not the natural enemy at that time.

After the air traffic controllers strike where the leadership of the national AFL-CIO caved to Ronald Reagan's threats, the labor movement became a servant to the Democratic party. We lost our ability to be courted by both sides.

The Catholic Church should espouse their strongest core beliefs to their congregation and encourage only that they pull the ballot lever for the candidate that will best represent them. I will guarantee that were this to happen, both parties would take notice and start doing what is best for the nation and not their political ideologies.

## **TOM BURNS**

### **Portland, Oregon**

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In response to Jesuit Fr. Thomas Reese's article — "Will the Catholic Church self-destruct or bridge the partisan divide?" — a few thoughts.

Reese approaches the divide from a partisan perspective. I am registered as "non-affiliated" voter. My biggest problem with his approach is that as a Catholic Church, we need not necessarily take partisan sides but we must proclaim Gospel values. The moral compass of our country has seemed to disappear and the Catholic Church and its priests and bishops hold some of the responsibility for the loss. The guiding principle of disciples of Jesus is, "Love one another as I have loved you." The "moral compass" is expressed clearly in Matthew 25 — feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, shelter and clothe the naked, visit the sick and imprisoned.

It is that end to which all disciples of Jesus should strive. Yes, we often fail. But we cannot fail to proclaim those truths of our faith as a challenge to all who would be disciples of Jesus. Sure, some members of our congregations may not like hearing that message anew. But it is a message that transcends partisan politics.

The church must have the courage to proclaim what is a difficult message to hear. It must be willing to correct errors in the thought of those who justify, by whatever mental gymnastics, that the message of Jesus is clear and we are, as his disciples, responsible to live that message. We must not give up and continue to try, in our own personal lives, to live what Jesus calls his disciples to do.

**(Msgr.) JOSEPH R. SOBIESIAK**

**Citrus Springs, Florida**

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Mike Jordan Laskey has written yet another insightful article: [Confessions of a reluctant parish shopper](#). However, I'd like to offer a couple of counterpoints to his search, based on the personalities of my family's parish — which we shopped to find almost 27 years ago and still love.

I'd first ask him to give each parish a couple of tries, varying the Mass each time. Our parish is one community where (most) everyone is comfortable with each other, but one in which there are slightly different flavors of worship at the four different Masses each weekend. One has a pull-out children's liturgy of the word and thus draws our young families. Another is largely populated by our senior members. If his family picked the wrong Mass, he would not necessarily get the "community flavor" he is looking for.

Two suggestions to add to his criteria list. First of all, how welcomed do you feel as you enter church? As with entering a home, that is the very first, and usually very telling indication of what you're in for. Second, do the online research ahead of time. Not only can it help you pick the right Mass, but it can also give a good indication of the parish community beyond the Masses. How up to date, comprehensive, and inviting is the website?

I hope he and his family can find a parish community that "feeds them" and which in turn they can feed. In our own experience, we were welcomed into the community with open arms, helping us in turn become very active members — to the point where the Holy Spirit, working through the community, called me to the diaconate. Ordained 19 years ago, I am still actively ministering in our now three linked parishes.

**(Deacon) DICK CURRIE**

**Lawrenceville, New Jersey**

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The author described the experience well. Years ago, when I took a leave of absence from the Dominicans and the priesthood, and moved to Albuquerque, it was a strange experience to find a parish I could call "home," since I knew absolutely no one in the area. Finally, I found the Catholic Newman Center at the University of New Mexico.

After I moved to the Seattle area in 2013 to marry my wife Nancy, we had that same struggle. We had met at the Dominican parish in Seattle, and people knew the both of us, and then we moved to our present location in Shoreline, where the local parish uses incense (which my wife is allergic to), and I scheduling issues due to jobs and a study program.

We did the parish shopping for a few years until we found our home parish of St. Luke's on the other end of Shoreline.

**BOB MARZULLO**

**Shoreline, Washington**

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Reading Michael Jordan Laskey's column on parish shopping, I felt the need to add a few comments. I belong to the older generation when you lived with parish boundaries and endured whoever and whatever God and the bishop sent you. More recently I figured I needed to let my bishop know that some of his choices were poor and I asked God to change them. In the meantime, I looked elsewhere for spiritual nourishment.

I recall one church where we (my wife and I both) were overwhelmed by the greeting in the church lobby. We were embraced by people we had known years before. The music was alive, the sermon clear, doctrinally sound and delivered intelligibly. It took 30 minutes but was worth it. Afterward, we joined the community in the church hall for coffee.

I believe there are certain elements that most parishes lack in their liturgy, over and above the sense of community. This is not just an assembly but a celebration. The sign of peace should involve the whole community, not just a nod to your neighbor in the seat beside you. So it adds five minutes. So what? This is your family, your brothers and sisters in Christ.

## **BILL KEANE**

### **Leesburg, Florida**

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In a week of unusual, national turbulence, your manifesto "[Hate is not welcome aquí](#)" was just a bit too much for this Pope Francis loving, Vatican II, Catholic octogenarian who has never taken for granted the sacrifices and racial profiling of her own ancestors.

I am privileged to be a legal citizen of the United States and thank God regularly for my greats and grands who had the courage and good sense to escape oppressive homelands when they did, and I have no doubt that becoming legalized in the mid- and late-1800's was just as traumatic an experience then as it is now for those who currently crowd our Southern borders.

As Latinos and Latinas, is your sense of feeling hated and marginalized unique? Nonsense! You are not alone in your fury. Sadly, but simply, it goes with the territory



and you would be wise to learn to accept that this rotten, suspicious, hateful attitude toward incoming "strangers" is part of human DNA.

Placing the blame for the humanitarian crisis at the border and hateful rhetoric on President Donald Trump is too simplistic. The conditions described in those holding areas as well as the appallingly inadequate, processing procedures preceded his administration and it is a known fact that Obama was much more aggressive in returning illegals than Trump.

I once marched with Caesar Chavez for improved working conditions for migrant farm workers in California. Hearing of this, (former) friends in my church distanced themselves from us and we were immediately labeled Communist sympathizers. Yes, I do know what it feels like to be marginalized hatefully by misinformed and ignorant, fellow Christians.

## **NANCY McGUNAGLE**

### **Kalispell, Montana**

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Regarding Michael Sean Winters [article on Pope Francis' letter to priests](#), and the letter itself, I found it gravely lacking.

Where was the apology for the years of instructions from the Vatican to bishops to cover it up?

Where was the apology for the appointment of bishops so tuned to Rome that they were willing to suppress their consciences or moral sense of "the right thing to do" to blindly follow those immoral orders?

Where was the imperative investigation (by outside sources) to find out who gave those orders?

In my humble opinion, until the above elements are addressed, fully and forthrightly, there will be little healing and little restoration of trust.

For Pope Francis to theologize the sexual abuse issues and its cover-up misses the serious question of the curial personnel's amorality and the vast shortfall in the past selection of bishops. Basic right and wrong should precede obedience and institutional loyalty.

**(Fr.) JAMES E. HEALY**

## **Lee's Summit, Missouri**

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As a married Catholic layman, I found much of what Pope Francis so beautifully wrote to priests also applies in different ways to any of us trying to live a faithful life in Christ.

I felt this especially when I substituted "flock" with "family" and read his words about "there are still people unafraid to make lifelong promises."

So, what else is a marriage vow?

All of us are wounded by the failures of our church and especially its leadership in recent years. However we are not wholly blameless. Why were we not demanding accountability sooner? How many "yes fathers" and "whatever you say fathers" did we let slip?

Perhaps popes, priests, bishops, and lay need to focus more on our common humanity and pray for God's grace to live each role fully in a Christian community.

**BARRY MCGONIGLE**

## **Omagh, Northern Ireland**

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In his article "[Church in Poland continues confrontation with the LGBTQ community](#)," Jonathan Luxmoore wrote "Jedraszewski's words were aimed at people of same-sex orientations and transgender identities."

I would like to politely disagree with this statement. The church never condemns anyone for his sins or erroneous beliefs. Sin and falsification of the truth revealed by God deserve condemnation and never the sinner.

These are the things that Krakow Archbishop Marek Jedraszewski has spoken against when referring to the "rainbow plague."

Even though people of same-sex orientation and other sexually-confused persons deserve to voice their convictions as anyone else, the church cannot remain silent in

front of their erroneous sexual confusion especially when various political and "human rights" organizations try to spread and impose on everyone the false ideas about sexuality, family, freedom and the place of human person in the world created by God with its proper natural order.

In this sense, I would like to express my support for Jedraszewski and other church members who have the courage to voice their disagreement against the LGBTQ propaganda without physical violence.

Those "Catholics" who condemn the bishop in question or others for speaking against the LGBTQ falsifications of the truth confuse Christian love and mercy with thoughtless and unprincipled tolerance toward our confused brethren.

We cannot forget that to correct one's neighbor is an act of mercy rather than let him remain in his erroneous conviction and thus agree to his denial of the truth out of confusion.

## **GRZEGORZ OKULEWICZ**

### **Deszczno, Poland**

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The church should stand for the moral law as laid down by the God who is our creator.

Whether the WHO provides guidelines for gender ideology is of no consequence to what the moral law provides us in the manner of the creation of God who created us as male and female.

The WHO is not the authentic authority on gender and takes their cue from the social and behavioral sciences, leaving the actual biological nature of our being totally out of the picture of gender.

Attractions seem to rule the need for anyone to become spiteful against moral and biological laws of nature as well as the law set down by our creator.

It might be wise for all the left leaning people to check their own prejudices, who think the right leaning people have it wrong about love and care in the nature of the family, who provide a male and female for the model and the care and concern

within this family brings for the genuine love of children and their development.

The very idea that the LGBTQ can dictate the moral law of God through intimidation and manmade law as well as sanctioned in an ideological theory accepted by the WHO, is absolutely disgraceful for any God fearing person who believes they have the right and the permission from God the Trinity to carry out their ideology for the entire moral law and the world order. No one has this permission.

## **ROSE GALBRAITH**

### **Hamilton, Ontario**

#### Advertisement

As I've pointed out many times before, even in this publication, until the Roman Catholic Church jettisons its dependence on static scholastic philosophy as the hermeneutic for interpreting what is natural or not, it will continue to promote and foster discrimination against the LGBT community.

The Holy Spirit has not been sleeping throughout the ages. The spirit continues to reveal new insights on what is human and natural in God's plan for humanity and the universe. Why wouldn't God use all the avenues to the truth which have been created? The natural sciences (genetics, psychology, anthropology, etc.) besides theology and philosophy, are also avenues through which the spirit communicates the truth regarding human nature and the mysteries of God's creation. Have we been listening?

The essential tool to interpret and define what is natural and part of God's ongoing plan, is covenant love.

## **(Fr.) PASCAL IPOLITO**

### **West Seneca, N.Y**

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Colman McCarthy's article regarding the [pacifism of Joan Baez](#) reminds me of my argument with Joan at her Institute For the Study of Nonviolence in 1969.

We argued over the role of the hippies. She wanted them to do more in an effort to stop the Vietnam War. I wanted her to appreciate their lifestyle as a sign of the times in which automation was eliminating jobs.

She won. It is covered in my recent memoir, *Maverick Priest: A Story of Life on the Edge*.

**(Fr.) HARRY J. BURY**

**St. Paul, Minnesota**

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What can be done for Jeannette Cooperman to celebrate her story, "[After 45 years of music, a final concert for the St. Louis Jesuits](#)"?

What a gorgeous piece of work. Perfect ear, perfect sense of tone. Perfect.

Thank you. I saved it.

**ED READING**

**Walla Walla, Washington**

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Several years ago, our pastor collaborated with our music director in giving a homily based on "Here I Am, Lord." I was flooded with emotion as I meditated on the question, "Is it I, Lord?" Our deacon had been absent for some time due to illness and I had the powerful feeling that I was meant to serve as a deacon. The primary obstacle is that I am a woman.

As debate continues in the church about restoring the diaconate to women, I realize that I could not seek ordination unless the current clerical culture and decision-making process in the church were to be more broadly reformed, following the servant-leadership model of Jesus.

When that occurs, I may be able to discern my answer to the question, "Is it I, Lord?"

**JOANNE COREY**

**Vestal, New York**

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I read with interest the article, "[Parish roundup: Mass attendance declines in Philly.](#)" I am not surprised that people have left. While the article was about the church in Philly, it is occurring in parishes around the country.

As a 71-year old gay man, I have often contemplated leaving myself. What keeps me here is the Eucharist, which strengthens me to stay, at least for now.

The church's official teaching about the LGBTQ community is anything but welcoming; it is condemning. An example would be the recent firings of two gay couples in Indianapolis diocese who entered into a civil marriage. For years, the church has taught that we are promiscuous, but then condemns us who have been in long-term relationships. My own faithful relationship has been lived for 38 years.

My husband has left and his adult children have also. The only message that they have heard from the church has been exclusion and nonacceptance. For years, they shared the Eucharist with me. Now I go alone. Sad.

## **JOSEPH GENTILINI**

### **Hilliard, Ohio**

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Peter Feuerherd's article, "[Ministerial exception often protects church employers from lawsuits over firings,](#)" exposes another major reason that Catholic laymen and laywomen continue to leave the church in large numbers, apart from those disillusioned by the clergy pedophile scandal.

Both examples cited in this article involved two individuals, each following his and her conscience and acting responsibly to do what each saw as being for the greater good of the church and those in their charge, only to be thwarted by the institutional church. In both instances, as in the pedophile scandal, church officials acted to protect the reputation of the church in lieu of providing justice for the lay people involved. In both instances, the individuals were removed from their positions and were unable to seek recourse through civil lawsuits because of the "ministerial exception rule."

The irony in both cases cited, was that the letter of the law was followed by church officials, while the spirit of the law was grossly violated. The intent of the "ministerial exception rule" is to give church institutions the right to fire employees who speak

or act against the teachings of the church, quite understandable. However, in the cases reported, both individuals acted heroically to seek justice for members of the church and were chastised for their efforts.

The majority of people who seek employment within the church do so with the expectation that they will be treated justly in a Catholic institution. Unfortunately, every diocese in the country, no doubt, has numerous examples of mistreatment of employees not unlike those recorded in Feuerherd's article. It is this kind of clericalism whereby lay people have no recourse to justice, that encourages laypeople to vote with their feet by leaving the church.

## **THOMAS SEVERIN**

### **Connellsville, Pennsylvania**

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I've just read Franciscan Fr. Daniel Horan's [fine article](#) regarding the crazy refusal of many Americans to admit that the huge number deaths by gun violence is directly relatable to the easy availability of firearms in the community.

Two points from here in Australia.

We are mourning the death on Aug. 22 of Tim Fischer, deputy prime minister and leader of the rurally-based and usually conservative National Party in the 1990s. He strongly backed Prime Minister John Howard's call for very strict gun-control and gun-buy-backs after the Port Arthur massacre. Unpopular with some of his constituency, the legislation was, in Fischer's view, clearly necessary. An obvious example of the principle of the common good being applied by this person of courage and others like him.

Some years ago, I listened to a talk by one of Australia's most dangerous people, pro-euthanasia campaigner Philip Nitschke. With an ironic smile, he told his supporters that one group never represented among those seeking to end their own lives was the veterinary profession. "Why not?" asked Nitschke, "Because vets don't need us, they have easy access, far easier than that for medical doctors, to fatal chemicals." A 2018 study found the suicide rate of veterinarians in Australia is disproportionately high. Another example of the too-ready availability of instruments of death?

## **GERARD HORE**

### **Toowoomba, Australia**

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This article, "[New rules could extend time migrant children, families spend in detention](#)" is absurd. You wanted children kept with their parents. You got what you wanted.

Leftists complain that illegal children are separated from their illegal parents, many of whom are not their parents. Now leftists complain when the illegal children will be allowed to stay with their illegal parents, many of whom still are not their parents. You can't have it both ways.

If I commit a crime and am arrested, my children don't go to jail with me. I am separated from my children. Technically, the illegal children are also guilty of the crime except for those too young to make the decision themselves.

Criminals can't have it both ways. Children can't be both with their criminal parent and separated from them.

The Trump administration does not oppose legal immigration. You should not be promoting illegal immigration. You are the people supporting immorality. Want the laws modified? Go to Congress and get them modified.

## **ADRIAN REHAK**

### **Marion, Iowa**

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What a lovely article from [Mark Piper about Sr. Fintan](#). And so important for all of us.

I was a Protestant high schooler when I started taking voice lessons from Dominican Sr. Mary Bertha. She, without proselytizing, opened the door of Catholicism to me. I saw what the sisters did and learned from them their kindness and welcoming, and eventually, at age 19, became a convert to the church.

The Catholic Church has helped me through a difficult life, but now, at 73 years of age, I still remember the wonder I felt in learning about this church that knew that God was real, right there with us, all the time. Thank you for this reminder of how I



got here!

## **LYNNE MILLER**

### **Oakland, California**

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Please pass on to Pat Marrin my appreciation of his regular Francis Chronicles cartoons, and of his daily Pencil Preaching.

The Aug. 27 offering "[Sinners welcome](#)" is one of the most succinct summaries of the Gospel message that I have ever read. It is brilliant — a true gift from God.

## **MAEVE RACE**

### **Kenilworth, England**

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Although a long fallen away Catholic, I look forward to Michael Sean Winters' columns. To me, they are the voice of love and reason that I'd hoped Vatican I would bring to the church, and which almost succeeded.

However, [in discussing assisted suicide](#), he avoids answering the question: why is it "wrong" as he states emphatically. I know all the church's reasons, and used to support them, but as with most of its teachings on sexuality, the magisterium bases its dogma on personal ignorance.

Having chosen, for better and worse reasons, to eschew the intimate life of marriage and parenthood, the hierarchy and theologians don't understand the sense of love and commitment to others that might impel a person to stop the carnage his/her death is causing those who give life its meaning and worth.

Oh, they know the official teachings about family love, but they haven't experienced it as a responsible adult. It's interesting that they usually rush to the conclusion it has to do with saving money or with personal pain, since they've never had to sacrifice for their own child or a beloved partner. For some of us, the normal majority who've had intimate relationships and children, the long-term suffering of our family might be the main consideration.

Or perhaps some of the preachers against assisted suicide have returned from the dead to assure us they were right?

## **PATRICK NAGLE**

### **Olympia, Washington**

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The "[1619 Project](#)" is the next piece of historical revisionist propaganda, trying to explain a complex country by advancing the next "all-inclusive" idea.

The difference is that those other theses understood themselves as ideas, meriting historical argument, while the "1619 Project" (with its free school handouts) is simply propaganda to present a thesis as fact, which our "woke" generation should embrace.

Sorry, but American history is not reducible to one long chain of indignities, duplicities, and hypocrisies that only contemporary Americans are aware of, after the "great awakening" of the "resistance." This Polish-American white male (whose ethnic forebears also launched the first strike back in 1619 Jamestown because of discrimination) does not intend to do perennial penance over "privilege" nor reduce the United States to the one-sided narrative the "1619 Project" proposes.

## **JOHN M. GRONDELSKI**

### **Falls Church, Virginia**

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I stopped reading the noted editorial as soon as the author misquoted President Donald Trump about "good people."

As publishers you should not permit lies to be stated in any of your publications. To permit such distortions puts you in a position as being viewed as a leftist/progressive publisher.

## **PAUL WIELOSZYNSKI**

### **Mt. Juliet, Tennessee**

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And what about the first slave codes not being enacted until the 1660s? Where/why did these first blacks come to Virginia in 1619?

Also, why not start with the conquistadores on land now part of the U.S. and Mexico?

Where does American history actually begin? And what about the Dominican Bartolomeo de las Casas and Spanish arguing before the royal court in Spain that Indians were indeed human beings when this was being denied in many parts of Europe?

The 1619 project has its points; but please get history right.

**(Sr.) DOLORES LIPTAK, RSM**

**Cromwell, Connecticut**

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I've just read your disgusting article that has been years in the planning to bring down Christianity and your country.

And you call yourselves Catholics?

You should be ashamed of yourselves, and I will pray for your souls as you will need it.

**DAVID ASHTON**

**Gillieston Heights, Australia**

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I disagree with your assessment. I had high hopes for the New York Times series but was disappointed by the two installments I read.

For example, the writers linked slavery with the American form of capitalism without any rationale to support cause-and-effect. Another example, the essays were written as if the USA was the only society to be built on the backs of slave labor. That's nonsense.

I found the series to be a series of non-sequitur assertions which does not serve the need for understanding the evil that slavery was, and still is.

**WILLIAM H. McANALLY**

**Granbury, Texas**

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