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by NCR Staff

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

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End the bloodshed in Ukraine

I am not sure if anyone fully understands the Russian president, but it does seem that the war is going nowhere. (ncronline.org, [March 20, 2024](#)) What concerns Pope Francis is the destruction and loss of life. The Archbishop actually seems to inform

Francis' position as the article states:

Gudziak mentioned the thousands of Ukrainian families who have lost someone in the war, or have family members who are missing in action, and are wondering if they are still alive.

"Hundreds of thousands of families are living in this acute anxiety from day to day," said the archbishop.

The pope desires negotiation in order to end the bloodshed, and not increase the number of families facing the acute anxiety mentioned by the archbishop.

Prominent economist Jeffrey Sachs seems to agree with Francis' position, writing in a [post](#) on Feb. 8, 2024:

The \$61 billion will make no difference on the battlefield except to prolong the war, tens of thousands of deaths, and physical destruction of Ukraine. It will not 'save' Ukraine. Ukraine's security can only be achieved at the negotiating table, not by some fantasized military triumph over Russia.

Ukraine may have tried to negotiate, but they need to keep trying, so as to bring closure to those who have lost so much. Additional bloodshed only continues the loss, and the issue becomes circular.

**THOMAS HOVEL**  
**McFarland, Wisconsin**

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## Ruben Garcia and Mother Teresa

Thank you, Pauline Hovey, for your excellent article about the wonderful work of Annunciation House in caring for migrants ([March 15-28, 2024](#)). My husband and I have had the privilege of knowing the Director of Annunciation House, Ruben Garcia, since 1976. The allegations being made against Ruben's holy work in caring for people in the crisis of migration are, as Hovey stated in her article, "beyond outrageous".

Hovey noted that, in the 1970's, Ruben and his young friends were meeting in a rundown building in downtown El Paso, trying to discern God's will. One of the things that came out of that discernment process was an invitation to Mother Teresa of Calcutta to come to El Paso and speak about her work with the "poorest of the poor." Ruben, a young youth minister, got on the phone and called up Mother Teresa to invite her to El Paso, Texas — and she came! To me, that speaks volumes about both Mother Teresa and the man who has emulated her work for all these many years.

**KATHERINE PAREDES**  
**San Antonio, Texas**

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## Church and Roe v. Wade

As a bridge player, I'd say that Democrats are if anything underplaying their hand (ncronline.org, [March 20, 2024](#)). Of course, abortion rights are not a silver bullet that will guarantee Democratic victories, but they are an important factor motivating many voters. Michael Sean Winters states of President Biden that " Many of us wish he was more willing to look for a compromise on the issue, one that would limit abortion later in pregnancy." But this is the Democratic position, to codify Roe v. Wade, which does allow restrictions on abortion after viability. Perhaps the Catholic Church should reconsider why it is getting into abortion policy at all. It is not a good thing for the Church to be pushing for imposition of its beliefs on the rest of the population, which is a violation of the First Amendment. This is particularly so because it requires the Church to get in bed with the Republican Party which has adopted a whole laundry list of policies that are contrary to the Gospel. The Church should tend to its own flock, and not get involved in politics on this issue.

**VICTOR THURONYI**

**Sandy Spring, Maryland**

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