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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.

Pro-life Democrats

As a pro-life catholic, I say yes, there is room in the Democratic party for Catholics, in fact they are greatly needed (ncronline.org, [Aug. 19, 2024](#)). People seem to forget that the right to say "yes" to an abortion is also the right to say "no". Catholics fixate on abortion and ignore why women say yes or no, what allowed them to say no, what coerced them to say yes. If you can answer those questions, and use that knowledge to support women, then abortions will be rare.

GLEN SHIREY

Estes Park, Colorado



Mary Magdalene and female deacons

What an intriguing possibility that a passage from St. John's gospel contains a template for a female diaconate (ncronline.org, [July 20, 2024](#))! As a regular old "Catholic in the pews", I don't have the background to evaluate this scholarly hypothesis but what I know for sure is that we desperately need a greater emphasis in the kind of tender-loving service to others exemplified by Mary Magdalene. I see so many struggling with addiction, depression, or estrangements within a family, and above all, a yearning for heart to heart connection with others. Mary Magdalene cared for Our Lord in His humanity. By whatever name, may we do more to care for each other following her beautifully feminine example.

KATHERINE PAREDES

San Antonio, Texas

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Clergy and partisan politics

From my perspective the only individuals who try to equate voting for Republicans with salvation are a few highly partisan clergy as well as some self-identified religious members of the Republican Party who are trying to drive the vote (ncronline.org, [Aug. 22, 2024](#)). Although I have not in recent years been subjected to

the preaching of politics from the ambo, in years past some priests and their bishops seemed to cross the line with partisan rhetoric. Since most parishes are likely as polarized as the general population it could be argued that any political pronouncements would likely alienate half the congregation and since the revenue stream depends upon a universal buy-in to support the parish that would become fiscally problematic is short order.

The mission of our ecclesial leaders, at least among those who still support democracy, is to encourage voting. They should not address any issues head on unless Pope Francis addressed the issue specifically, such as the existential threat of climate change. However, given that many of our fellow citizens believe the false narrative that climate change is a hoax even that topic might not be well received.

Given the spectrum of issues, from existential threats to our physical environment to perceived threats to our cultural environment, there is no real single issue which could possibly separate any citizen from sincerely exercising his or her conscience when casting their vote. Personal integrity when exercising one of the fundamental rights which defines our democratic republic and places our civic responsibility front and center is an occasion for personal edification, not one for public condemnation.

CHARLES A LE GUERN
Granger, Indiana
