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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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'The Rings of Power'

I appreciated Eric Clayton's insights on "The Rings of Power" series and on how we look at scripture (ncronling.org, [Oct. 3 2024](#)). So much of the social media commentary on the series has nit-picked the choices of the show-runners with an

almost fundamentalist approach to J.R.R. Tolkien's original work, or the various film adaptations. I for one, just enjoyed the unfolding panorama, and the fleshing-out of the characters with the creative imaginations of the producers, writers and actors. Indeed, we need to step back from the scriptures now and again to allow the power of "story" and revelation to influence us. That's what Tolkien would have urged us to do!

**FR. GREG FRIEDMAN OFM**  
**Albuquerque, New Mexico**

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Pro-life policies, Harris

Thank you for providing Rebecca Bratten Weiss's article, "Maybe Kamala Harris is not 'Pro-Life' But Her Policies Are" (nronline.org, [Sept. 20, 2024](#)). Her profoundly important perspective clarifies aspects of this subject that are too often dismissed, ignored, and misunderstood. I am reminded of the old question, here paraphrased: If you were accused of being "pro-life" would there be enough evidence to convict you? Providing adequate healthcare for all women, I believe, would be the essence of "pro-life." Harris could claim that label, but she has instead chosen to address the serious issue of reproductive rights in full. And, as we have sadly seen of late, self-assigning a label does not make it honestly yours, whether you are a Republican candidate or a Catholic cardinal.

**JENNIFER SYMONS**  
**Green Valley, Arizona**

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Vance and natalism

Like so many 'Catholic traditionalists," Vance (a fairly recent convert) isn't traditional enough (ncronline.org, [Oct. 15, 2024](#)). He has cited St. Augustine as an influence, but here's what Augustine has to say about 'natality' in The City of God: "In order that there might be a beginning, humans were created." The philosopher Hannah Arendt's doctoral dissertation was titled, "Love and St. Augustine," and Arendt often referred to this passage to show how human beings' exercise of free will breaks the iron determinism of cyclical history. Arendt, herself childless, nevertheless impacted the thinking of generations of students and readers. We all share "natality", whether or not we are biological parents. Jesus, after all, was himself childless.

**DR. HUGH F. KELLY**  
**Brooklyn, New York**

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