



Top row, from left: Social Service Sr. Simone Campbell, Jesuit Fr. Greg Goethals, Cynthia Bailey Manns and Rumi Morales. Bottom row, from left: Michele Murray, Meg Nodzson and Jeanne Ruesch.



by Joe Ferullo

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There's an ancient curse, [often attributed to the Chinese](#), and it goes like this: "May you live in interesting times."

Well, here we are. Except that, for the National Catholic Reporter, times like these are not a curse — they are in some ways a blessing. The election makes what we do more urgent and vital than ever. Our mission compels us to be a place our readers can come to for that very rare thing: reporting they can trust, journalism they can rely on, and intelligent commentary that brings light instead of heat.

Over the next four years, nearly every aspect of Catholic social justice will be targeted in one form or another: immigration, the environment, health care, education, the social safety net and more. How will Catholics respond — both those of us in the pews, and Catholic leadership across the country? We will be here to cover those stories, independent of any outside influence.

As our [editorial](#) after the election put it: "We need each other more than ever to avoid doubt and to hold fast to principles of fairness, decency and truth."

Let me tell you now about some of the people who will help us "hold fast" to those principles — and build NCR's strength for the road ahead. Over the last few months, we have added seven members to our Board of Directors, drawn from all aspects of Catholic life: education, advocacy, business and philanthropy. Six of the seven are women, fortifying NCR's firm belief that half the population cannot be excluded from key roles in the work of guarding and guiding our faith.

They include Sr. [Simone Campbell](#), a [recipient](#) of the 2022 Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest U.S. civilian honor. Campbell, a Sister of Social Service, was a vital advocate for the Affordable Care Act and a leader of the traveling advocacy effort known as [Nuns on the Bus](#). For 17 years, she was the executive director of [Network](#), which lobbies Congress on behalf of Catholic social justice issues.

Jesuit Fr. Greg Goethals has been president for 19 years at [Loyola High School](#), the leading secondary school in the Los Angeles area. He has spent a career in Catholic education. Goethals holds a master's in counseling from the University of San Francisco. For that degree, he performed field work at the [Shantie Project](#) in San Francisco and the AIDS Health Project.

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[Cynthia Bailey Manns](#) is one of four laypeople from the U.S. chosen by Pope Francis to attend the [synod on synodality](#) at the Vatican. She is an adult formation director at the St. Joan of Arc Parish in Minneapolis, and has long been an advocate for increasing the role of women in church. She's served on the lay advisory board for the St. Paul-Minneapolis Archdiocese.

Rumi Morales is a partner at Chicago-based [Sentinel Global](#), an international venture capital fund, and was a longtime executive at Goldman Sachs. Her focus and expertise are areas such as artificial intelligence, blockchain and financial technology. In addition to NCR, Morales is on the board of several nonprofits, including Girl Scouts USA and the Chamber of Digital Commerce. She is an adviser to several technology startups and venture funds.

Michele Murray is the senior vice president of Student Development and Mission at the Jesuit-led [College of the Holy Cross](#) in Worcester, Massachusetts. She has dedicated her life to Jesuit higher education, also serving at Seattle University and Loyola Maryland. Murray co-authored [Helping College Students Find Purpose: The Campus Guide to Meaning Making](#). She holds a doctorate in education policy and higher education leadership from the University of Maryland.

Meg Nodzon is a senior program officer for [GHR Foundation](#), one of the nation's leading Catholic foundations. GHR Foundation, based in St. Paul, Minnesota, is involved in a broad range of efforts, including Catholic education, the environment and issues of human dignity. Nodzon herself has long been involved in advocacy and support for Catholic education.

Jeanne Ruesch serves as chair of the Ruesch Family Foundation, which focuses on medical research, education and the arts. The family [established](#) the Ruesch Center for the Cure of Gastrointestinal Cancers at Georgetown University and the [Christoph Ruesch Neuroscience Research Center](#) at the National Rehabilitation Hospital. Jeanne Ruesch has served on several boards, including Georgetown University, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and Catholic Charities.

We are honored to have these new board members — and all the expertise they bring — involved in our mission. Their dedication is one way we can tell that our mission matters.

We also know this because of you, the people who read NCR and support us. You are remarkably committed to our work. You read us carefully and you write to us often, commenting about our reports and adding important personal context. And we continue to add more people like you to our growing community of readers.

There's another interesting saying that's been around for a long time. I first saw it many years ago, etched in limestone outside the old [Daily News Building in New York](#). The job of journalism, it said, was to "comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable." For 60 years, that has been part of our mission. It will become even more important during the uncertain weeks, months and years ahead.