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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.

Practicing Catholics respond to practicing Catholic JD Vance

As a practicing Catholic, I was delighted to see the USCCB speak "truth to power," against Donald Trump's plan to rid our nation of illegal immigrants (NCR, [Jan. 26, 2025](#)).

In defending his boss's plan, Vice President JD Vance, a Catholic convert, said, "I think that the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops needs to actually look in the mirror a little bit and recognize that when they receive over \$100 million to help resettle illegal immigrants, are they worried about humanitarian concerns? Or are they actually worried about their bottom line?"

Luke writes in his Gospel that Jesus was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord. Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing."

Jesus spoke these words to fellow Galileans in the synagogue where he was raised. I believe this was Jesus's inaugural address to his pending ministry.

Perhaps our Catholic vice-president missed the meaning of this Gospel that was read at the same time he echoed the above words to Face the Nation moderator Margaret Brennan.

STEPHEN BACCARI
San Francisco



I just finished reading Camillo Barone's breaking news article, "Vice President Vance criticizes US bishops over immigration", and experienced a visceral reaction to Vance's reported words, namely, that as a "practicing Catholic", he is "heartbroken"

over the bishops' condemnation of Trump's immigration policies (NCR, [Jan. 26, 2025](#)).

Vance [converted](#) to Catholicism and was baptized and confirmed in August, 2019 at St. Gertrude Priory in Cincinnati, Ohio. It is my understanding that an adult who desires to convert to Catholicism is required to go through the OCIA (Order of Christian Initiation for Adults), known prior to 2021 as the RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults). Social justice, a belief rooted in the dignity of every human person and the concept of the common good, is considered an integral part of the RCIA process. Teachings on the issues of poverty, economic fairness and human rights are core beliefs of the Catholic faith.

I can't help but wonder if the Church's core beliefs about social justice were omitted during Vance's RCIA process, given his comments regarding the bishops' position. And as is often the case with those in the Trump camp, Vance obfuscates the issue. He implies that when the bishops are granted federal funds to help resettle immigrants, they are interested more about their "bottom line" than they are about humanitarian concerns. It's hard to comprehend that a graduate of Yale Law School would not have understood the concepts of social justice in the RCIA process and would additionally impugn the motives of the U.S. bishops.

MICHAEL HARVAN
Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio

I have a hard time seeing how Vice President Vance says he is a practicing Catholic and has the views he does on immigration. As Christians we should be concerned with the disenfranchised, the poor, migrants and everyone that Jesus spoke of in the Sermon on the Mount. Also, maybe he should take some time and read the gospels to see how Jesus wants us to live our lives. The agenda of the platform which he has allied himself with to foster his own political future is not what living the gospel looks like. I will pray that someday before too much harm is done he will see the error of his ways, then maybe he can call himself a practicing Catholic.

JOHN WOLFE, OFS
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

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Catholic thanks Budde

This letter is in response to the article "After Eye-Brow Raising Sermon to Trump, Bishop Budde Beset with Criticism and Praise" (NCR, [Jan. 23, 2025](#)). This Catholic has nothing but praise for the bishop. Her sermon of mercy reflects the heart of Christ and it is difficult to imagine how anyone would find this offensive.

Budde heartened my heart, which if I am totally honest, has been troubled by the silence of so many churches and religious leaders on the matter and indeed the very issues of character as it relates to the presidency.

That she spoke those words of truth at the same podium where Martin Luther King had to remind us of justice and compassion many years ago is telling — during the month we remember him.

The church can not follow the world. We must lead it.

JACQUELINE HICKS GRAZETTE
Annapolis, Maryland
