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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.

Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence

I really enjoyed John Grosso's piece "Word extinguished: Bishop Barron's digital silence," about Barron's silence in the face of the daily violation of human dignity being carried out by the current administration (NCR, [Feb. 17, 2025](#)). I do, however,

want to point out that the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence are neither "an anti-Catholic hate group" (as Barron characterizes them), nor a "comedy troupe" (as Grosso does). They are in fact something far more interesting and important — a religious order.

That's how the Sisters describe themselves on their [website](#), and according to their website, they have over [90 houses](#) in the U.S. and abroad to prove it. They started their "ministry" (their word, not mine), in 1979, and as HIV/AIDS began ravaging the gay community a few years later, they worked tirelessly to raise funds, awareness and care for people dealing with the disease. Those Catholics who are offended by their antics might ask themselves whether they have done as much.

Queer Catholics (like me) see them as an affectionate imitation of the sisters and nuns who have always done most of the real work of ministering to the outcast and the marginalized. I urge anyone interested to read Melissa Wilcox's book, [Queer Nuns: Religion, Activism, and Serious Parody](#) (NYU Press, 2018).

MICHAEL PETTINGER
New York, New York



Church and racism

Thank you for publishing Alessandra Harris's important article (NCR, [Feb. 25, 2025](#)) . It takes real courage to speak out, especially now when American Catholics seem to be regressing in terms of human dignity and rights, succumbing to the influence of

the wealthy, white, privileged elite. Ms. Harris highlights the troubling history of the American Catholic Church and the Black community — including its ties to the selling of human beings — while acknowledging a few aspects of the Church that deserve celebration. My concern is that Catholics who ignore the Church's historical abuses of power risk undermining the teachings of Jesus as they usurp Jesus' teachings and follow Trump. This thought-provoking piece has inspired our family to subscribe to NCR. Thank you for shedding light on these crucial issues!

KAREN CHENIER

Lake Oswego, Oregon

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Partisan bishops

Part of Archbishop Broglio's tepid statement reads as follows: "I wish [to reiterate](#) that the Catholic Church is not aligned with any political party, and neither is the bishops' conference. No matter who occupies the White House or holds the majority on Capitol Hill, the Church's teachings remain unchanged" (NCR, [Feb. 13, 2025](#)).

The proclamations produced by the Vatican do indeed remain the same. But these American bishops dilute the gospel message when Dolan offers a benediction at Trump's inauguration (Trump takes his Christian faith seriously) and Broglio issues weak statements from D.C.

If the battle with an American president was over abortion, religious liberty, same sex marriage or contraception, Broglio, Dolan and their brethren would be condemning the White House on Fox News.

Thank you Michael Sean Winters for identifying the reasons I will not miss Cardinal Dolan's presence in the Archdiocese of New York.

GENE ROMAN

Bronx, New York
