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Bishop Robert Barron of Winona-Rochester, Minnesota, arrives for the first working session of the assembly of the Synod of Bishops Oct. 4, 2023, at the Vatican. (CNS/Lola Gomez)

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.

Defending Bishop Barron

When offered fairly and charitably, criticism can help the Church learn from different perspectives. However, ad hominem attacks peddling in misinformation only serve to wound the Body of Christ. This is the case with National Catholic Reporter's recent fact checking column on Bishop Robert Barron's [reflection](#) from being at President Trump's address to Congress (NCR, [Mar 7, 2025](#)).

The misleading information begins right in the headline. Barron never said President Trump is like a bishop leading the Mass. He [drew an analogy](#) between the state ceremony of the address and the various ceremonies of the Church's liturgy. The Holy Mass is the most perfect form of Catholic liturgy, but liturgy takes other forms as well. For example, me, Barron, and millions of Catholics pray the Liturgy of the Hours every day. And of course, the Church has many settings for solemn processions. The idea that anyone was suggesting Mr. Trump was as persona Christi at the Mass is nothing but click bait.

Worse, NCR calls Barron disingenuous for saying where he and the bishops have stood on President Trump's policies. We bishops are pastors, not political pundits. My brothers and I [do not support or oppose Mr. Trump](#) or any other candidate for office. As teachers, we do share what impact an individual policy may have on the common good. Barron truthfully pointed to examples where we felt Administration policies will harm our sisters and brothers and where we feel policies will promote human dignity. NCR conveniently ignored examples that would challenge the assertions made by the column. You say we have been silent since [the Holy Father's letter](#) to us [on immigration](#). Yet, Archbishop Broglio, on behalf of all of us, immediately [responded to Pope Francis](#) and sent that response to every U.S. bishop and the media.

NCR could choose to [share that message](#) to bring the faithful together or you could choose to remain silent about [how my brother bishops](#) are trying to give voice to the voiceless. There are many other examples of how this recent NCR column lacks charity and clarity. I will not go through each one, but rather ask who fact checks the fact checkers? Misinformed opinion that fails to consider all the available evidence

fails the test of responsible journalism.

(Bishop) WILLIAM BYRNE
Springfield, Massachusetts



Censure Barron

As a cradle Catholic whose two sisters were missionaries in Africa for over twenty-eight years, I must write to condemn Bishop Barron's remarks following the State of the Union speech, comparing Trump's address to "high liturgy" (NCR, [Mar 7, 2025](#)). That Barron unequivocally lauds a president who has taken a wrecking ball to so many poor and marginalized people is unconscionable.

Destruction rains down from the Trump administration daily: discontinuation of funds for Catholic Relief Services, cutting of USAID, the abandonment of Ukraine in favor of the murderous Putin, [drastic funding cuts](#) for SNAP, food banks and schools, the firing of over 100,000 federal employees including scientists and healthcare researchers, the [proposal to cut](#) Medicaid steeply, the [blackmailing](#) of Catholic universities to discontinue policies and teachings they consider to be DEI.

In the meantime, Trump proposes massive tax breaks for his oligarch friends and celebrates greed. How can Barron compare this craven man's speech to "high liturgy?" Trump is proving to be the anti-thesis of Christ's teaching. Having used the pro-life movement to get elected, he is now the reason multitudes will suffer and die.

Barron should be censured for his shameful remarks and I encourage Catholics to write to the bishops' conference to do so. We expect our clergy to condemn Trump's dehumanizing policies, just as Christ did with the Pharisees in the Temple.

DOLORES GREEN MILMOE
Poolesville, Maryland

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Barron: There's nothing to clap about

Bishop Barron has a global platform and professes to be apolitical, at least in public. But his review of his time in Washington read like a PR piece for the Trump administration (NCR, [Mar 7, 2025](#)). He appeared giddy to meet Republican leaders, compared the ceremony surrounding the President's speech to the liturgy of the Mass and, most concerningly, made a point to criticize Democrats who would not clap.

Bishop: There is nothing to clap about. This president is deporting immigrants with a cruelty admonished by the Holy Father and your brothers who lead the US Church. This president has canceled USAID and thus guaranteed the death of children in need of food and medicine. This president is upending the world order, siding with a ruthless, murderous dictator, Putin. Why should any good American, serious Christian or faithful Catholic support an administration led by this president. Barron did not support these policies, to be sure, but his fawning admiration for the Republicans and his criticism of the Democrats said it all. He can call himself nonpartisan, but his words say otherwise. There are so many Christian Nationalists who support this administration. The Catholic Church has the opportunity to show the world that not all Christians support this man or his policies that fly in the face of the teachings of Jesus.

KATHLEEN CORCORAN
