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by NCR Staff

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In his first column as [NCR publisher/CEO, Joe Ferullo called](#) the synod a "crossroads" for the church, adding that the next two years "could easily turn out to be the most decisive since Vatican II." Following are letters to the editor responding to Ferullo's column. The letters have been edited for length and clarity.

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I am so excited after reading Joe Ferullo's article about what our precious U.S. Catholic Church is turning into — I 100% agree with absolutely every single thing Ferullo wrote!

I'm almost 80 years old, now, but I sure do remember way back in the day when our liturgies were sparkling with excellent music, prayers and even dancing. Every time I was in church in those days, my heart would just feel like it was bursting with joy. Needless to say, I'm a Second Vatican Council Catholic, and there is absolutely nothing any bishop, priest, or other conservative person can say or do to ever make me change my mind.



Thank you so very much for this wonderful article and for the excellent service Ferullo will clearly give to NCR and its readers.

**MARY WUDTKE**  
**Chicago, Illinois**

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Does it seem to you that the U.S. bishops' conference is in denial about what's in store for the future of the church in America, or do they just not care? Or, are they okay with it? Since the church here is on course to be permanently reduced, do you think that the majority of the bishops would rather have a church that is, in their eyes, small but pure, rather than one that is, again, in their eyes, large but fallen?

Well, I suppose it doesn't matter. The church is going to shrink in any case. I hope it's what they wanted, because it's what they're going to get.

**DANIEL CORTES**  
**Hayward, California**

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According to most available metrics the Catholic Church in the United States has been in decline for over 50 years. The number of nuns has decreased by over 80

percent, the number of priests by 60 percent, hundreds of churches have closed, and church attendance is greatly reduced.

Some pundits place much blame on the Second Vatican Council which occurred in the decade of Vietnam War protests and race riots. Also, in 1968, *Humanae Vitae* spawned opposition by hundreds of theologians and most lay Catholics who dismissed the encyclical as unreasonable. Thousands of priests resigned in the following decade.

The decline of Catholic and mainline Christian worship has also been eroded by secular ideology. The sexual abuse crises in the Catholic Church punctuated a further loss of the faithful. The movie "Spotlight" in 2002 glaringly educated the public about a problem prevalent since the '70s. Thousands of cases occurred in the '80s and '90s which were documented by writers Jason Berry, Fr. Thomas Doyle, and others. As is well known, the church hierarchy protected errant priests and paid billions to victim's families.

I am hopeful that with more lay involvement and a change in hierarchical structures, the church will renew itself as the light of the Christian world.

**(Dr.) EDWARD FEROLI**  
**Rockville, Maryland**