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by NCR Staff

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NCR political columnist Michael Sean Winters publishes three columns a week, and we get many letters to the editor responding to his opinions. In the last week, Winters published a column about the U.S. bishops' conference [disbanding their committee on President Joe Biden](#), while Biden was reestablishing a faith-based office in the White House. He also wrote a [column about Rush Limbaugh](#), who more than anyone else, coarsened American political discourse and paved the way for the rise of conservative populism. And a column about [how our nation can reclaim the truth](#) in a post-Trump world. Following are letters to the editor responding to these

three columns. The letters have been edited for length and clarity.

"US bishops stand down while Biden stands up" was an enjoyable read. The U.S. bishops' conference won't play ball with President Joe Biden as they haven't with reformer Pope Francis. There's too much at stake, human pride being as it is.



Church Militant and U.S. bishops generally have no vision. Change is anathema. Some believe their own rhetoric, that the church hasn't changed in 2,000 years and won't now. Culture warriors wear blinders unable to view the American landscape.

The U.S. bishops' conference stand down is noteworthy. If an intervention didn't occur it means clearer minds have prevailed. The church doesn't have the ammunition to win the Biden battle. Over the decades, the bishops are suffering from too many self-inflicted wounds and don't need another. This doesn't mean there won't be an EWTN-type lone wolf bishop with a misguided martyr for the faith complex.

Hopefully, the U.S. bishops will grow a spine and administer fraternal correction or censure the reprobate. A fragile peace is better than none.

MICHAEL J. McDERMOTT

Tyler, Texas

Michael Sean Winters writes "economic policies that sustain the economic insecurities without which their paranoid policies would collapse." Fine, but why doesn't he list these "economic policies"? What policies does he mean? Are we to guess what they are or just accept that they do exist because he says they do?

This is the typical modus operandi of the left. And what the heck is "movement conservatism" as opposed to "traditional conservatism"? I know that conservatism is a mystery to the left. Liberalism abhors limitations like the 10 amendments and the restrictions imposed on government by our nation's Constitution.

That's where you will find the definition of conservatism. Nothing is left for doubt or confusion. We conservatives proudly define the "policies" of conservatism, the policies that define and sustain the freedom and liberty of the individual.

JOHN A. DONNELLY

Middletown, Delaware

As a British observer of the U.S. Catholic and political worlds, I guessed that the late Rush Limbaugh had a particularly urgent need for our prayers when I heard Raymond Arroyo's eulogy on the World Over and his whining about the conspicuous absence of mourning at his demise. Michael Sean Winters' article opened my eyes to his egregious contribution to the abandonment of truth-telling in much of the U.S. media as well as in the Republican Party.

But I am disappointed by Winters' misrepresentation of the beliefs of the religious right. The U.S. televangelists I have heard insist that the dinosaurs were indeed fully ticketed for Noah's trip and that the dragons made it on to the ark too. They drew the line at unicorns however and some at least of their followers as well as some conservative Catholics last November must have put Donald Trump's fitness for office in the unicorn category.

MICHAEL WALSH

Enfield, England

It is clear that Michael Sean Winters' vile diatribe re: the passing of talk show host, Rush Limbaugh, marks himself as a graduate of the Hedda Hopper School of Journalism. If uninformed NCR readers are to believe Winters, Limbaugh was a "coarse, repugnant, vulgar, paranoid, duping, demeaning bemoaning Manichaeian thug."

A side note to Winters' self-righteous pronouncements is the fact that none other than St. Augustine was reputed to have been a Manichaeian for nine years of his own life before, like Limbaugh, acknowledging Christ as his true, spiritual guide. Another fact is that Limbaugh was once the protégé of noted Catholic commentator William F. Buckley Jr., who recognized a brilliant, rising star when he saw it.

For dedicated, conservative listeners of talk radio, especially in rural areas of America, Limbaugh was a beacon of light, a motivator for goodness and truth; one who accompanied them in the fields, in the shops and on the road; dishing out unmatched good humor, and enlightening, uplifting, political commentary. They loved him to pieces. For Catholic Christians who rarely speak ill of the dead, be they Augustine or Limbaugh, those of us in sync will express our anger against Winters' journalistic obtuseness in the current, politically correct manner of canceling him and his column — at least for the rest of Lent.

NANCY McGUNAGLE

Kalispell, Montana

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It's not just Donald Trump. The root of disregard for truth goes far beyond and long before Trump. Question my sanity if you will, but Christianity and especially our Roman Catholic version, bear significant responsibility for this.

Stay with me for a moment. Where does our Scripture — the textbook of Jesus, our medium and message — begin? The Gospel of John. And where does John begin?

"In the beginning was the Word: the word was with God and the Word was God. ... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:1)."

If the "Word," "word" and "flesh" mean anything they mean truth — divine and incarnate, in the church and in the world. This is at the very essence of Christian reality. Despite this, our legitimate teaching and leadership authorities have in many ways departed from our sacred obligation. We have invented a realm of theology, dogma, regulation and rhetoric that is precariously positioned beyond the edge of reality and reason. We have redefined words in our image and likeness and have strung a logic from them that is founded in self-serving imposition rather than in phenomenological, verifiable reality.

That is what cults do. We have brought our non-reality to the secular in self-serving political crusades. Evangelical Christians, our Christian politicians, are simply playing out what we started. Trump and Trumpism is the ultimate expression of a rejection of truth.

The "Word" has a strong message for us.

DENNIS MacDONALD

Bedford, Nova Scotia

There he goes again! While of course I agree with his main point in this article, I can't let him sneak something in that is less than honest.

I think that when you are trying to make your point you should deal with your opponent's strongest argument. Buried in the article is a statement attributed to those pro-choice readers like me. He states we believe a fetus is "simply 'a part of a woman's body.' " While some may do this, I do not and feel this is not the main issue. Rather, the point is that any decision made regarding the fetus, directly affects the mother in a way it affects no one else. This is not a statement diminishing the reality of the individuality of the fetus.

The basic argument is that in a pluralistic society where societal support for most pregnant women, children and new families is limited and often exposes them to significant dangers, criminalizing abortion is the state imposing a religious judgement, how is that just? How does that respect the conscience that God gave us all?

Play fair and deal with this argument and maybe we can start to have a dialogue.

GEORGE ECKENRODE

Phoenix, Arizona

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