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by NCR Staff

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[Pope Francis met with Slovakian Jesuits](#) and mentioned a "large Catholic television channel" that is critical of him. He criticized the network, which can be assumed is EWTN, for attacking him, saying it is the "work of the devil." And [NCR political columnist Michael Sean Winters says](#) the U.S. bishops need to rethink their relationship with EWTN. Following are NCR reader responses to these two articles. The letters have been edited for length and clarity.

EWTN over the last three years has made their focus on overturning abortion laws their main priority. Their enthusiasm resembles that of a political party who wants to demonize all Democrats, making pro-life the issue above all other in choosing which candidate. This is wrong.

EWTN is starting to use fire against fire. God uses the opposite of fire. Love destroys confusion and doubt.

MARK CICERO

New York, New York



The article, "It's time for US bishops to reconsider relationship with EWTN," should be "It's *long* past time for US bishops to reconsider relationship with EWTN."

Though I don't watch it, I sometimes read the National Catholic Reporter Facebook page with its comments. It will have links and ads for EWTN. Anyone posting an opposing viewpoint are roundly ganged up on with the intention to either have them conform or be driven from the site. The proto-schism is full-blown in their minds. All they need is a leader to follow.

The U.S. bishops will never challenge the monied and influential EWTN cadre because it would mean they would be in EWTN's crosshairs and the last thing bishops want is to bring attention to themselves with the negative consequences. Bishops without a vision can't lead, so can't challenge anyone or anything let alone

powerhouse EWTN. A major question is how many bishops will actively support EWTN against their fellow bishops to the point of going to the mat? Bishop factions played out behind closed doors would be in full view.

The U.S. bishops won't defend Pope Francis who says some are praying for his death. It has literally come to life and death situations in the U.S. Catholic Church. Anti-Francis bishops would be pro-EWTN. That too many supported Donald Trump is a bellwether for the depth of sickness in the U.S. church. It didn't happen overnight. It didn't begin with Trump. It was present in the church before Vatican II, having changed little since. There are no signs of a challenge to the status quo let alone change anytime soon.

MICHAEL J. McDERMOTT

Tyler, Texas

I did not like Mother Angelica's rough edges. She was not a favorite of mine. I did not like the iron fist with which she ruled everything. I once called into the live program where she was bemoaning abortion. I said, yes, I understand but the answer is not just billboards against abortion, but evangelization of the culture and nation.

The public disagreement between Nancy Pelosi and Archbishop of San Francisco is the type of confrontation that ought to take place, the other bishops of the U.S. should rally behind him as should the National Catholic Reporter.

RICK LUCZAK

Bay City, Michigan

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The political posturing of EWTN is not unlike other right-wing media outlets in that it entertains a segment of the population which is amenable to their arguments. Everyone is free to connect to these media outlets or not as they wish and demonization of any is counterproductive since it inspires more allegiance on the

part of their followers motivated by nothing more than spite.

The Catholic Church in our country is polarized to the same extent as the broader public. The bishops are no different than the politicians whose views they echo and those are the views encouraged by many benefactors who have a vested interest in the polarization of our people. Our divisions lead to political brinkmanship and uncompromising confrontation which is the very opposite of what a mature democratic republic needs in its law makers.

Although Michael Seam Winters advocates the bishops not have a relationship with EWTN, that is one medium in which the bishops can address a large segment of the Catholic population. In much the same way, the right-wing politicians use their own media to address their own base. To be certain this has an effect of continuing our differences and divisions. However, those divisions would likely continue in any case. The better option is to present different views in those media so the selected audiences hear different positions and thereby broaden their audiences encounters with different views.

Arguably, this would entail an editorial shift on the part of those media outlets as well as being receptive toward spokespersons who are not normally a part of that same echo chamber. However, in the interest of bringing their flocks together as one people, and not continue to encourage separation by political divisions, many bishops who customarily present conservative views could try to argue the other side in some respects to allow for open discussion and not closed proselytizing.

CHARLES A. LE GUERN

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