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by NCR Staff

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"My heart goes out to the seminarians who are going through the current trauma of change under Pope Francis, because I went through the same trauma after Vatican II," [Jesuit Fr. Thomas Reese writes in a recent column](#). Following are NCR reader responses to the column that have been edited for length and clarity.

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I was thrilled as I read Jesuit Fr. Thomas Reese's thoughts in this article because they are exactly my own thoughts. All during Pope John Paul II's and Pope Benedict XVI's reigns, I prayed daily that the Holy Spirit would come forth and give us a pope who would bring us back to the wonderful community I experienced after the Second Vatican Council. And low and behold, the conclave elected Pope Francis.

I am a Vatican II woman. I was 19-years-old in 1962 when Vatican II began, and I admit at the time, I was frightened because the God I had been raised with was a scorekeeper, a judge, and I always felt like I was on my way to spend eternity in hell. Vatican II literally saved my spiritual life.



During the Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict years, as the liturgy was "reverted" back to verbiage used prior to Vatican II, I simply prayed the Vatican II prayers during Mass, (softly so as not to offend anyone sitting near me). I just could not make myself say the old words. I still do that to some degree today. And I am totally convinced that our good God is just fine with it.

I thank him every single day for giving us good Pope Francis and pray also that he will have a long and healthy life as he continues to follow God's will in all his endeavors to shepherd our church.

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

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Thank you, Jesuit Fr. Thomas Reese, for your article that demonstrates so clearly what happened in the church, in seminaries and in religious orders, both right after Vatican II and now after Pope Francis became pope.

I was a few years after you in seminary (1962-66) and our Vincentian seminary welcomed Vatican II and we were encouraged to study the documents and listen to the theologians who came to Chicago and spoke. Would that present seminaries and

young priests take time to study the documents of Vatican II and the follow up documents on liturgy, ecumenism, relationship with the world, etc.

**(Fr.) LOUIS ARCENEUX, CM**  
**New Orleans, Louisiana**

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