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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.

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Two conversations needed

Thank you for publishing the responses of Fathers Massingale and Greiten to the “homophobic slur” ([ncronline.org](http://ncronline.org), [June 5, 2024](#)). I want to focus on the distinction

they make between two conversations: that about the need for celibate men (and women) to lead holy, authentic lives and that about understanding the role sexual orientation plays in every life choice. Both conversations are needed in today's Catholic church. And both must begin long before seminary training. It is parents who must navigate the long process of guiding their children into loving adulthood.

**SISTER KIERAN SAWYER, SSND**  
**Milwaukee, Wisconsin**

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Abortion and abortion laws not morally equivalent

It is an established Catholic Church teaching that the fact that an act is immoral is not a sufficient reason for acts of that kind to be punishable under the law. Every law must itself be tested to be sure it is itself morally justified. The Catholic Catechism is clear about this: "Authority is exercised legitimately only when it seeks the common good of the group concerned and employs morally licit means to attain it. If rulers were to enact unjust laws or take measures contrary to the moral order such arrangements would not be binding in conscience" (The Catholic Catechism, [#1903](#)).

So it is very unfortunate that many Catholics support the laws prohibiting abortion that have been passed since the Supreme Court's opinion in *Dobbs* without having carefully asked whether these laws are in fact morally justifiable; and this is especially unfortunate if their support for these laws will impact how they vote in

the next election (ncronline.org, [June 4, 2024](#)).

I have published a careful study of the laws prohibiting and punishing abortion passed since *Dobbs* in the May 2024 issue of the journal of the Dominican religious order, New Blackfriars. This article, titled "[Should Catholics Support Laws Prohibiting Abortion?](#)" explains why these laws fail to meet the criteria proposed by Thomas Aquinas, and supported by Catholic teaching, for determining if a law is morally justifiable.

**DR. DAVID OZAR**  
**Evanston, Illinois**

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Cardinal Newman Society infecting Catholic education

Thank you for pointing out the role of the Cardinal Newman Society in advancing an anti-trans platform as part of its overall goal of promoting a right-wing "traditionalist" Catholic agenda (ncronline.org, [May 21, 2024](#)). The Cardinal Newman Society is a cancer in Catholic education and is the epitome of looking for the splinter in a neighbor's eye. I have seen my own alma mater — the University of St. Thomas in Houston, Texas — transform itself into a "Newman Guide School" complete with the consistent use of the term "faithful Catholic" in its alumni marketing materials. I find the very notion of any Catholic institution trying to position itself as more Catholic than another as not only out of line with scripture but reflective of the deadliest of sins: pride.

As a "faithful Catholic" of an entirely different worldview who works in education, I am alarmed by what this organization is doing and the schools that seek its approval. If we train our young people to see Catholicism as a set of rules to follow and train them to judge others as sinners who are less Catholic than they are, we are moving in a very frightening direction. Please continue to cover the activities of this organization as it has tremendous and frightening power over many in Catholic education.

**APRIL PETRONELLA**  
**Houston, Texas**

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