

## [Opinion](#)



by NCR Staff

[View Author Profile](#)

### [\*\*Join the Conversation\*\*](#)

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. [Learn more](#)

April 23, 2021

[Share on Bluesky](#)[Share on Facebook](#)[Share on Twitter](#)[Email to a friend](#)[Print](#)

[In her latest column](#), Phyllis Zagano assesses whether or not the Catholic Church can change. She writes that those who don't want change have a lot of clerical support and while those who do want change continue to speak up, many more are walking away from the church. Read the following responses from NCR readers to Zagano's column. The responses have been edited for length and clarity.

---

Can the church change? The question is: Does the church want to change? No. To change is to relinquish power and control, the hallmarks of Catholicism today.

The line about Pope Benedict XVI's stance on the laity is so contrary to what Jesus wanted and had in the early church. If he wrote Canon 129.1, he is still alive, let him unwrite it! This canon law stuff is getting really old and represents stagnant teachings.

Let the Holy Spirit breathe new life into this male dominated church. Women do represent half of society.

## **JANE FRANCISCO**

### **Charlotte, North Carolina**



\*\*\*

Phyllis Zagano provides a brief but incisive history of the church which explains its entrenchment. Raising the specter of alt-right — and even "disorganized progressive" — influence on the church also adds yet another level of pungency to the stubborn miasma which appears to be wafting through the Vatican's hallowed halls these days.

Overall, with patterns of mixed messaging, occasional epiphanies and general subterfuge, the place appears to need a hefty dose of Second Vaticanism. But at this juncture, who in charge will let anyone keep the window open? The growing option, instead, seems to be: obfuscate on pressing issues till the Roman Catholic Church

can return to its long-standing marginalization of most things progressive.

## **R. JAY ALLAIN**

### **Orleans, Massachusetts**

\*\*\*

Those of us who are senior citizens can recall vividly the sea change that occurred in the 1960s with the implementation of the Vatican II reforms. As an altar boy, I participated directly in the celebration of the Tridentine Mass and learned to recite Latin. Although I also learned the translations, I know many people in the pews read from their missals or recited prayers by rote without knowing what was being said and without any knowledge of the meaning behind what they were saying.

However, in spite of that barrier to understanding, many people were taken aback by the changes and wanted "their" church to remain static. Their comfort level was at risk and they thought they were being left behind. The refusal of the modern, post-conciliar church to embrace a changing culture gives many of us the same feeling of being left behind since the reversion to an older and certainly less-inclusive church is not what the Second Vatican Council promised.

What has become readily more apparent is that the population which seems more comfortable with a retrograde church with a smaller active population is also the population which does not embrace widespread participation in our public, let alone our church, governance. A few leaders of the church, enabled by their dependency upon funding from some quarters, are embracing a political stasis as well as a liturgical stasis as if anchoring themselves to today will ward off an undesired tomorrow when people who do not share their fears of change will become more active and influential.

If the church leadership does not change with our changing culture, they will only find themselves much like the people who felt left behind in the 1960s who believed the church left them and they were no longer welcome participants.

## **CHARLES A. LE GUERN**

### **Granger, Indiana**

## Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts and ideas, reactions and responses to [letters@ncronline.org](mailto:letters@ncronline.org). The editor will collect them, curate them and publish a sampling in Letters to the Editor online or in our print edition.

We cannot publish everything. We will do our best to represent the full range of letters received. Here are the rules:

- Letters to the editor should be submitted to [letters@ncronline.org](mailto:letters@ncronline.org).
- Letters to the editor should be limited to 250 words.
- Letters must include your name, street address, city, state and zip code. We will publish your name and city, state, but not your full address.
- If the letter refers to a specific article published at [ncronline.org](http://ncronline.org), please send in the headline or the link of the article.
- Please include a daytime telephone number where we can reach you. We will not publish your phone number. It may be used for verification.

We can't guarantee publication of all letters, but you can be assured that your submission will receive careful consideration.

Published letters may be edited for length and style.

This story appears in the **Your thoughts** feature series. [View the full series.](#)