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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.

Dignitas Infinita

It would seem the church failed yet again to engage in dialog with the people it has taken pains to marginalize (ncronline.org, [April 8, 2024](#)). Obviously, we can not

expect clerics to have medical and psychological acumen such as would make them at least conversant of the issues confronting gender dysphoria. However, condemning medical and psychological treatment of those afflicted is callous and also hypocritical since our clerics proclaim that all individuals are created in the image of God. It would appear for some people, given the attitude of some clerics, that image is murky.

Similarly, many couples are confronted with physiologic limits which do not afford some women the ability to carry a pregnancy to term. The use of surrogates is one means through which that couple's own biological child can be brought to term through the use of a surrogate mother. How can the church, which claims all are children of God, diminish the birth of any child whose gestation progressed in the womb of a surrogate mother? The motives of the surrogates, as well as the needs of the genetic parents, are not a matter for celibate clerics to debate. Instead they should welcome a new life however conceived even though the gestation was a contractual arrangement as well as a natural event.

The church has received criticism for its opaque reaction to the abuse scandal which seems to never be resolved. Our prelates need to spend less time criticizing the faithful whose medical and psychological needs are just as opaque to them. They would find themselves more respected and credible if they showed by their embrace of all our faithful, regardless of differences, and spent less time trying to separate one group or another from the mainstream. If the bishops demonstrated they were true to their advocacy for all our people then the deviance of some clerics would be seen, even by the cynics, as a grievous aberration not as an all too common occurrence.

CHARLES A LE GUERN
Granger, Indiana

Advertisement

Streaming the Eucharist

We are writing to express our reaction to Fr. Tom Reese's article entitled, "Streaming the Eucharist Should Be Banned" (ncronline.org, [April 5, 2024](#))

We have historically found Fr. Reese to be a voice of reason and compassion with a vision of the Church that we embrace. But sadly, we found this article insulting and offensive to us, our Livestream community, and our parish priests.

We began joining the Livestream liturgy at Old St. Patrick's Church in Chicago during the pandemic. What we have experienced over these past years is a community experience that includes extraordinary homilies, outstanding music, and a welcoming community. Every liturgy is a prayerful celebration of our faith.

While Fr. Reese makes a theological point about the Eucharist, he does so in ways that denigrate those who disagree with his rigid position. We would have anticipated better understanding and openness in his discourse on this topic.

The Gospel accounts we are hearing these weeks after Easter describe the need for common values shared in a community of believers. We choose to be a part of a community that admittedly limits the opportunities to receive Communion but provides quality homilies, inspirational music, and a sense of community that reaches us through the airwaves.

Would Fr. Reese have us attend the types of parishes we have experienced over many years where new members are not welcomed but ignored, many celebrants are unskilled preachers, and the music is not inspiring?

We would direct Fr. Reese to consider the Pew Studies that describe the exodus from Catholic churches. Why is Old St. Pats full of in-person participants every Sunday along with hundreds of Livestream Community members? Is it because this parish is seeking donations? No, it's because some pastors are willing and able to exercise spiritual leadership in service to their communities!

JACK AND ROSE CALARESO
Reading, Massachusetts



Streaming the Eucharist

I never thought I'd be in a position to disagree with the great Thomas Reese, but here I am. While I appreciate that participating in Eucharist on-line is not ideal and may not provide the fullness of meaning, banning it would be a great disservice to many whose link to Catholicism and the ritual of the liturgy is kept alive through attendance at on-line services. Faith in the eucharist goes much deeper than actually being present and partaking of the host. On-line attendance reminds us of that deeper reality - the presence of Christ with us ALWAYS, not just in the "meal of the Eucharist." Weekly attendance on-line nourishes my faith, my values and my convictions. It feeds me. Without it, I would feel hungry. To use Reese's analogy, if my family were gathered for a meal, and I could only attend via zoom, I would be nourished by seeing their faces, hearing their conversation, appreciating the togetherness of their shared meal - even if I couldn't partake. That would be a preferred alternative than not "tuning in" at all.

I, for one, feel nourished every week by the quality liturgy of Old St. Pat's Parish in Chicago. It bolsters my faith and my hope for the Church, which often wanes under other circumstances.

My hope is that streaming the Eucharist will never be banned! And when I can attend live, all the better!

PATRICIA A. SHEVLIN
Indian Head Park, Illinois
