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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.

Women in Conversation

Last Saturday's article by Jean Molesky-Poz on Women in Conversation, a spiritual and educational community that emerged from the needs of a group of Catholic women in Berkeley, California, may be one of the most important articles I've seen in the NCR (ncronline.org, [Aug. 3, 2024](#)).

In the beautifully-written piece, Molesky-Poz tells how women created a space to do their own theological and spiritual reflection in an atmosphere of learning and sharing of gifts in an institutional church that does not want to hear their voices.

The women-only community has proven deeply enriching to those who are part of it. There's a tug of inspiration here. Readers may be motivated to start similar circles in their own parishes.

SIDDIKA ANGLE

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Eucharistic synodality

Regarding Fr. Thomas Reese's editorial, "Eucharistic Revival misses how synodality makes for a better Eucharist," I believe Fr. Reese would agree that first things come first (ncronline.org, [July 12, 2024](#)). Although the Pew Research Center's findings mentioned in the article may be slightly off — with reports suggesting up to 45% of Catholics may not believe in the Real Presence in the Eucharist — even figures like 35% or 25% are alarming. Those who already embrace the Real Presence may not need a Eucharistic Revival, but those who do not strongly believe certainly might. However, such a revival session attracts everyone — those who come to adore the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit through the Eucharist, and those who seek to find or strengthen their faith in the Real Presence.

It is widely understood that we must first have faith in what the Lord said about the transformation of bread and wine to be open to His presence in the Eucharist and to recognize His personal, loving embrace. The Lord first called each of His apostles individually and formed a personal, loving relationship with each one, bestowed the Holy Spirit and promised to be with them always before sending them out to do His work as a community, i.e., as His church. Thankfully, God treats us no differently.

As reported in NCR, Chicago Cardinal Cupich stated in his presentation to the National Eucharistic Congress, "The Eucharist can be thought of as a school for becoming a more synodal church." This Eucharistic Congress emphasized taking first things first.

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"No" to purity culture

After reading Rebecca Bratten Weiss' column "Does purity culture really keep women safe?" I have to say "NO; right ON, Sister!" (ncronline.org, [July 31, 2024](#)). I was raised in the 1950's when the responsibility for one's moral actions with regard to purity was placed squarely and totally on the female. The virtue of purity was presented in a way where males had no responsibility to develop self-control of their thoughts or actions. As a consequence, I became morally fearful and overly cautious with regard to dress and my own safety.

Having been a victim of this skewed moral formation I feel it did a disservice to both women and men. This type of formation may have appeared to let men off the hook for their immoral actions, but in the long run cheated them out of the dignity they possess as human beings with the freedom to choose, and NOT blame others for their bad choices. Further, Rebecca makes a strong case that placing blame for immoral actions on women encourages the secrecy so necessary for these actions to continue. It was foundational to the creation of this culture where women suffered and the abuser had the chance to go on abusing, unfettered.

In the final analysis, I have to thank Rebecca for the courage to call out this unjust and reprehensible moral training. I applaud her efforts to encourage men to step up and take responsibility for their actions.

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