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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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Gratitude for listening

Thank you to NCR for publishing the insightful and moving updated version of Robert Ellsberg's tribute to the late Bishop Thomas Gumbleton of the Archdiocese of Detroit

(NCR, [April 11, 2024](#)). I believe, if our Church is to remain alive and prophetic in this ever-changing world, we must actively embrace an unbridled attentiveness to listening: opening our hearts and minds, especially to those that have been taught to conclude that they are “unworthy.”

**FRITZI J BOHLMANN**  
**Macomb, Michigan.**

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### Word on Fire

I really enjoy just about everything that Michael Sean Winters writes, but he outdid himself with his article Bishop Barron’s Word on Fire is too thin-skinned for its own good (NCR, [May 3, 2024](#)). He outlines how off-base Word on Fire is, legally, on this issue, while raising the question of why they didn't engage in conversation on the issue rather than demand a retraction.

I find Bishop Barron to be an enigma. He is brilliant, with an unsurpassed grasp of Scripture; rare among Catholics, lay or clergy. His sermons on YouTube are inspiring and I try never to miss them. But I get tired of his railing against “secularism” and his reference to those attempting to dilute orthodoxy (a simplistic interpretation of the questions theologians grapple with). I follow church matters and see no evidence of such challenges to the faith. Winter's description of Barron as “.....the most effective apologist for the Catholic faith in the U.S. church.....(who) mistakes apologetics for evangelization” pretty much says it all.

**ANGELA MARCZEWSKI**  
**Schenectady, New York**

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Women's ordination

Carolyn Ancell awakens in me a wonderful vision (NCR, [April 13, 2024](#)). This article is the story of my life, except that I was a Catholic from birth. I spent my junior and senior years in Catholic School and when I graduated I felt a strong call to ordination. But the only future open to me in 1952 was to enter the convent. Now, 72 years later, that call from God still fills my heart. I am convinced that — although I am too old to realize my yearning — my ministry within the church is preparing future women to be ordained. I will continue to voice my vision daily while praying for Pope Francis to lead the church to a new reality. I may have to watch this from heaven, but I know it will come. If we share our vision with everyone we meet by the way we live our daily Catholic lives, I believe we can cause real reform in the not too distant future. This is my daily prayer!

**SISTER CELINE GOESSL**  
**Merrill, Wisconsin**

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