Opinion
News

by NCR Staff

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NCR chose Los Angeles Archbishop José Gomez as our 2021 Newsmaker of the Year. Gomez "squandered the majority of his presidency fighting culture war battles, such as the ones this year about politicians and 'eucharistic coherence' and against racial and other social justice movements." Letters have been edited for length and clarity. To join the conversation, follow the guidelines below.

I am appalled that this archbishop was selected to win an award. Why would such a shameful and negative member of the hierarchy be held up to us as one worthy of

esteem?

NANCY URANKER

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

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The editorial, "NCR's Newsmaker of 2021: Archbishop Gomez, a failed culture warrior," might more accurately read "NCR's wall of shame 2021 edition: Archbishop Gomez, a failed priest because he used the bloodied sword of a culture warrior rather than wear the armor of God."

They reap what they sow.

MICHAEL J. McDERMOTT

Tyler, Texas

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It's amazing what one can learn reading the instructions.

Why hasn't Los Angeles Archbishop José Gomez been made a cardinal? Although there was an exception in New York with Timothy Dolan being made a cardinal while Cardinal Edward Egan was alive, church tradition is there's only one cardinal in a location at a time and Cardinal Roger Mahony is alive.

KEVIN CRONIN

Laguna Woods, California

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I think we should all thank God that Los Angeles Archbishop José Gomez appears to be very hesitant to impose his reactionary, socio-theological views on the archdiocese.

As shepherd of the largest diocese in the United States, he's well situated to do an enormous amount of damage beyond his sorry leadership of the U.S. bishops' conference. Apparently, he hasn't. Praise be to God.

JEFFREY JONES

Hamburg, New York

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The glowering visage of NCR's Newsmaker of 2021, Los Angeles Archbishop José Gomez, perfectly reflects my response to him being chosen as NCR's Newsmaker of 2021. I understand the nature of this "award," but certainly there are those far more newsworthy because they actually contributed something to our struggling world in 2021.

How about, for example, those men and women of faith on the front lines fighting COVID-19 as well as the ignorance that has allowed it to spread throughout our country? How about the doctors and nurses and all staff people of faith who have actually contributed something to our church and society in the past year? Or how about the teachers and administrators in our Catholic schools who have worked against tremendous odds to continue to instruct our children in the faith during these very difficult times?

Their faithfulness, and not Gomez' naysaying, makes them the most newsworthy men and women of 2021.

I shudder to think what "award" you have in mind for San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone.

BILL KRISTOFCO

Parkville, Maryland

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He fails to appreciate the actual Gospel of the Lord and has given himself over to the right-wing political machine in the U.S. I suspect he thinks he is doing the work of the church and the Lord, but he is merely a stooge of the right-wing lunatics and is actively aiding and abetting the overthrow of what used to be a somewhat democratic system.

It is too bad he is too foolish to understand this and cannot see how he has allowed himself to be used by these criminals. Poor man that he is.

JOE QUINN

Dallas, Texas

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My wonderful mom sends me NCR articles every once in a while. I learn something new with each article and sometimes I get fired up by what I read.

Los Angeles Archbishop José Gomez issued a 1,200-word statement outlining disagreements about policies that, "would advance moral evils" following President Joe Biden's victory.

Gomez, take a look in your own backyard where the "policy" of covering up clergy sexual abuse is the ultimate example of moral evil. Wake up, take responsibility, and tell the truth about your role in the cover-up. Until then, Gomez, you're a fraud wearing a costume.

On one hand, the church is pro-life. On the other hand, is the cover-up, manipulation, intimidation, minimization, and rejection of some pleas for help which have destroyed men and women mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. That is not pro-life.

DAVID PIETRASANTA

Encino, California

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The article about Los Angeles Archbishop José Gomez describes the character of several prelates, who like Gomez, will never be elevated to cardinal. Our country is becoming increasingly polarized and certain prelates are either encouraging those divisions, which already are dividing the Catholic population, or they exacerbating those divisions with their rhetoric.

Sunday morning should be a time of peaceful contemplation and a feeling of how we are carrying out the teachings of Christ in our lives. We should not need to be concerned about where on the political spectrum our fellow parishioners find their comfort level. The latter posturing only serves to make us suspect our brothers and sisters of conforming to the worst stereotypes into which the media prefers to categorize the voting population.

If we only think of our brethren in terms of politics when they occupy the adjacent pew, we will only see them through the lens of prejudice, thereby labeling them pro or con about any given social issue. We need to see one another only in the light of fellow travelers making a personal pilgrimage under the aegis of the church.

If Gomez and his like-minded fellow bishops don't understand that all our sheep belong to the fold, not just the ones who agree with them, he will have turned Jesus' teaching about the good shepherd on its ear. Some in the hierarchy, like Gomez, will not look for the lost sheep but will encourage others to seek different shepherds.

CHARLES A. LE GUERN

Granger, Indiana

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Congratulations to NCR for having the courage and initiative to publish a well-deserved critique of Los Angeles Archbishop José Gomez for his disgraceful "leadership" of the U.S. bishops' conference.

This cleric is yet another example of churchmen following a trend out of fear rather than conviction. The whole institutional church structure is rotten with opportunistic grovellers. Pope Francis is to be pitied, as he is obliged to preside over this puny system, where, for decades or more, new bishops have been chosen, not for outstanding character traits, but for being compliant "yes" men. The membership of the bishops' conference is one consequence of that modus operandi. I know about it, because I was once part of it.

CYRIL NORTH

Brampton, Ontario

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It certainly saddens me that NCR has chosen Los Angeles Archbishop José Gomez for their Newsmaker of the Year. Not because it is the wrong choice, but because it is the right choice concerning this man's disappointment as a spiritual leader of the church.

In the Beatitudes, I'm particularly drawn toward, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God." During such a tumultuous time, we expect our spiritual leaders to step up and protect those who are less fortunate than ourselves. Instead, he engages in cultural wars attacking those who seek social justice.

I am reminded of the words written in *No Man Is an Island* by Trappist Fr. Thomas Merton on the measure of charity, that the "beginning of love is the will to let those we love be perfectly themselves, the resolution not to twist them to fit our own image."

We, as Catholics, have a responsibility to protect those that are less fortunate than ourselves. We must work for racial justice, work for alleviating poverty, work for fair and equitable distribution of wealth and accept all into our Christian family. To open our hearts and minds to those who are seeking to be treated fairly. This includes the poor, the LGBTQ community, women, the elderly, the infirmed, the immigrant and

those of other religions. He needs to stand with us in these very difficult times.

STEPHEN G. SMITH

Commack, New York

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