Opinion



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Cardinal Bernard Law of Boston, who became a symbol of the church's lack of response to sexual abuse by clergy, has died in Rome at the age of 86. According to the Whispers in the Loggia blog, a funeral in St. Peter's may be as early as Friday.

Structures put in place after revelations about the sex abuse crisis included the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors. But sadly, the current members' terms have not been renewed, nor have new members been appointed. NCR's editorial warns against complacency.

Complacency is also a danger in the aftermath of the release of the Australia's Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse report, warns Francis Sullivan of Australia. Columnist Fr. Tom Reese challenges the two controversial assertions in the report, about celibacy and confession, but notes the report says much more than that.

The story about Fr. Gregory Greiten, the Milwaukee priest who came out as gay in an essay on the NCR site, has been picked up by national media. Some stories include a subsequent statement from Milwaukee Archbishop Jerome Listecki, of support, understanding and compassion for Greiten.

The tax bill passed both the House and Senate yesterday but has to be re-voted on in the House because of three small changes, including one that benefits homeschoolers.

This week's Justice Action Bulletin highlights parishes offering sanctuary to immigrants facing deportation and some Las Posadas events that are focusing on the plight of immigrants here.

"Blue Christmas" services, which acknowledge that the holidays can be difficult for those who are grieving, are a trend among some churches, including Catholic ones.

Read about a crèche-collecting family who has 500 nativity sets in this week's Parish Roundup.

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Michael Sean Winters shares what he's learned from women as the moral reckoning around sexual misconduct continues. For example, just because it's not illegal doesn't mean it's not immoral. (ICYMI: Anita Hill says sexual violence is part of broader sexism against women.)

Author (and now bookstore owner) Ann Patchett gave up shopping for one year. In her essay about the experiment, she cites growing up Catholic and credits a nun and a priest for helping to realize that "stuff" is not important.

That should inspire those who are frustrated by the commercialization of Christmas, including the columnist who thinks "Christians should hate Christmas" — or at least what passes for Christmas these days.

Learn more about the town of Jesus' birth in a review of a new book on Bethlehem, which finds that there's more to Bethlehem than the Christmas story.

Five more days of Advent: NCR, with our sister publications, Celebration and Global Sisters Report, has some Advent resources to share with you. Whether you are looking for Scripture study, some quiet reflections or an inspiring read, check out **our Celebration of Advent page**.