Opinion



by Heidi Schlumpf

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The top religion story of the year, according to Religion News Service, was President Donald Trump's born-again-like embrace of evangelical politics—this, despite increasing religious disaffiliation in the country. Other big stories of 2017 were the shooting at a Texas church, a wedding cake that a Christian baker refused to make and the status of Jerusalem.

Columnist Michael Sean Winters finds four examples of how Pope Francis' reforms began to alter the U.S. ecclesial landscape in 2017.

Some good news to end the year: A judge's partial lifting of the ban on refugees from Muslim-majority countries is giving hope to those fleeing war, poverty and violence.

Why did President Trump decide to move the U.S. Embassy in Israel? A Palestinian-American commentator explains how it's an attempt to shore up his base but will have long-ranging implications. And now the Israeli Prime Minister has said he will name a train station at the Western Wall after Trump.

Callista Gingrich has formally assumed her duties as U.S. ambassador to the Holy See, after she presented her letters of credential to Pope Francis.

After 13 years as a lobbyist, Sr. Margaret Clark describes how Washington has changed: it's more partisan and many new legislators are relatively ignorant about the process of government.

ICYMI: After three gay musicians were ousted by a new pastor at a Minnesota parish, parishioners and others have rallied to support them.

Another English bishop has added his name to an apology for the current English Mass translation.

The exodus of 655,000 Rohingya have fled Myanmar this past year, as their villages were burned to the ground and amid widespread rape and killings. The story of one of the most rapid exoduses in modern history is told in images, words and videos here.

In his Christmas message, Pope Francis prayed for children suffering around the world because of immigration, poverty and war, mentioning a number of countries, including Syria, Iraq, Venezuela, Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia, Burundi, Congo, Central African Republic and Nigeria.

But Americans are suffering too. If you haven't already read this in-depth piece about poverty in America, make time today to hear the stories of their struggles.

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Opinion:

A reporting trip to South Sudan and coverage of the United Nations has caused Global Sisters Report reporter Chris Herlinger to take peace more seriously this year.

Philip Pullman's latest novel features a totalitarian nightmare and is not as spiritual as his previous books, but is still worth the read, according to our reviewer.

As many folks relax between Christmas and New Year's, it's a good time to take the advice not to succumb to "hurry sickness."

Christmas and the cross are connected, writes a woman who lost a child this past year.