Opinion
News



by Michael Sean Winters

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Over at CatholicMoralTheology.com, Tobias Winright has two excellent posts. The first responds to Ross Douthat's article in the March 18 New York Times. The second marks the occasion of Pope Francis' fifth anniversary. His hopes before the election, published in the Tablet, have largely been fulfilled!

Speaking of Douthat, Paul Baumann has a devastating review of his new book at Commonweal. Baumann's track through history is instructive of just how simplistic are the claims made for the tradition by Douthat — and Cardinal Raymond Burke et al.

From the Current Newspapers, Kirk Kramer on the Underground Railroad's history in Washington, D.C. I know where the stops on the railroad were in my hometown in Connecticut but had no idea that Washington was "a hotbed of Underground Railroad activity."

Congressman Adam Schiff laments the fact that so many Republicans are refusing to confront the president and the potential threat posed to this country by continued Russian interference in our electoral process. Politico has the story. If Jack Kennedy

were alive today, he could write a sequel to his 1957 Pulitzer Prize-winning book, and he would only have to change one word in the title: *Profiles in Cowardice*.

Also at Politico, Sen. Dick Durbin calls out former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton for comments she made earlier this month about those who voted for President Donald Trump, who she said were motivated by misogyny and xenophobia. Durbin rightly points out that a large number of Trump voters had previously voted for President Barack Obama. He is too kind to point out that the American people could sniff all along what Clinton really thought about them. I can never forgive so many of them for voting for Trump, but I have little difficulty understanding why they were reluctant to vote for her. Can't the whole Clinton clan just be quiet and go enjoy being filthy rich somewhere far from the cameras?

From the "What is going on at the National Catholic Register?" file, an open letter to the bishops of the world from an obscure theologian who is not making any argument we have not heard before, yet the Register treats it like some big deal. Wassup? I recall what Cardinal Blase Cupich said at the University of Chicago: People are not scandalized by Pope Francis. People are being told to be scandalized. But why are the Knights of Columbus, which give a lot of money to the EWTN media empire, of which the Register is a part, continuing to fund these disloyal attacks on the pope? And where are the bishops?

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From Foreign Policy, a look at Mohammed bin Salman, who may be the most important person in the Mideast today. Will his reforms go far enough? He was also the subject of a segment by Norah O'Donnell on "60 Minutes" last week. It was fascinating, and if you missed it, take the time to watch it here. We should all say a prayer that the crown prince is for real and, if he is, that his reforms are successful.

From The Hill, the United States still spends twice as much as most other industrialized countries on health care. This is now eight years since the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. The ACA may have made health care more affordable for many Americans, but we have a long way to go in making the whole affordable for the country. Want to know why other countries have spanking new airport terminals, clean and efficient public transportation, and a generation of young people that is not drowning in debt? Because they are not spending so much

of their GDP on health care!

[Michael Sean Winters covers the nexus of religion and politics for NCR.]

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