Opinion
News



by Michael Sean Winters

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March 27, 2018
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I confess that the politics of gun control has left me jaded about our political system. But on Saturday, listening to these youngsters confront the absurdity of our liberal gun control laws, I felt my cynicism melt away. And how could Catholic ears not notice that their language was our language: life, compassion, love, conversion, righteous anger, participation and civic engagement. On March 14, I wrote about Bishop Robert Barron's recent address at Notre Dame in which he fretted about young people, mocked their solipsism and labeled them the "whatever" generation. I am wondering if the bishop wishes to clarify his remarks in light of what the nation witnessed over the weekend.

From the Boston Catholic website, Cardinal Sean O'Malley's words of encouragement to young Catholic high schoolers as they began their participation in Saturday's march in Boston. I was pleased to see the cardinal praising these young people to the hilt, but I was also struck by this passage: "The Second Amendment to the Constitution affirms the right of citizens to own firearms. But any right has its limits; hence all rights require regulation. We recognize that truth with regard to the rights of free speech, free association and the practice of religious beliefs." Did our favorite friar run that last point by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, which has never

met a regulation of religious belief it did not fight?

How not to respond to the students' march? The National Rifle Association's Colion Noir had the dumbest statement, saying to the articulate youngsters, "No one would know your names" if their classmates had not been killed. I can't remember a more morally obtuse statement.

At the Working-Class Perspectives blog, Tim Strangleman reviews a new book, *Know Your Place: Essays on the Working Class by the Working Class*. He notes that it is rare to even hear the voices of working-class people, but this volume includes essays from young members of the working class, and the lack of social capital in which they are raised comes through.

At Medium, Richard Trumka and Rick Bloomingdale on how labor carried incoming congressman Conor Lamb across the finish line in Pennsylvania's 18th Congressional District.

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At Politico, former Secretary of State Rex Tillerson complained that Washington was "a very mean-spirited town as he left Foggy Bottom. Ugh. If he spent a year working with President Donald Trump and thought the main problem was mean-spiritedness, the guy is clueless. And while we are all understandably nervous about his replacement and, even more, the replacement of Gen. H.R. McMaster with John Bolton as national security adviser, let's remember that Tillerson took part in the hollowing-out of the State Department and should go down in history as one of the least-effective chief diplomats our nation has ever had.

Finally, as the church enters into the great triduum, the events upon which our faith stands or falls, we begin with the haunting, pleading Lamentations of Jeremiah. Here is a lovely recording of them from a Tenebrae service in 2017.

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

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