Opinion



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Fifty years ago today, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee. This somber anniversary is being commemorated in many ways, including with reflections on current progress on poverty, race, peace and other issues for which Dr. King fought. (You can see the New York Times front page from April 5, 1968 here, and King's obituary here.)

Columnist Michael Sean Winters, for whom King's funeral was his first memory of a public event, calls him "a great American and a genuine Christian prophet" and recalls that Pope Francis mentioned King during his visit to America. (A Vatican official said King's dream lives on in the pope, who is an admirer of the late activist). Patricia Lefevere sees King and Thomas Merton as spiritual brothers who knew they were living in a *kairos* moment at a providential time.

Of course, King was in Memphis to support striking sanitation workers. These days it's public schoolteachers who are taking to the streets — in South Carolina, Oklahoma, Kentucky and, next, Arizona — to demand fair wages and benefits. And non-tenure-track and part-time faculty at Loyola University, who recently unionized, are striking today over issues of pay and benefits.

In other labor justice news, employees of the Diocese of LaCrosse in Wisconsin — many of whom worked for low salaries and counted on their pensions to get them through retirement — will instead receive a lump sum payment that will be less than their full pension.

Canon lawyers interviewed by NCR's Vatican correspondent Joshua McElwee believe the punishment for the Guam archbishop found guilty last month by a Vatican tribunal indicates that it was not likely for the allegations of sexual abuse made against the prelate.

ICYMI: Three Catholic feminist leaders reflect on this year's Voices of Faith event, forced to be held outside the Vatican walls this year, which perhaps led to "bold and direct challenges to the institutional church' during the presentations.

Now that Sr. Jean Dolores Schmidt of Loyola University is no longer in the news (you know you're a real media star when The Onion parodies you), you can continue to learn about other amazing women religious at Global Sisters Report, like this nun from Cameroon who is educating children from the Pygmy tribes.

Opinion:

"God did not create hell, we did," says Jesuit Fr. Thomas Reese in summarizing the controversy over whether the pope believes in hell or not. (He does.)

A priest blogger at PrayTell warns of the dangers of trying to go back to an ideal time in Catholic liturgy, quoting liturgist Robert Taft, SJ, who wrote: “For Christians, the only “ideal period of liturgy” is the one they are living in.”

Listen up!

If you’ve never been to the Los Angeles Religious Education Congress, which attracted 40,000 people to the three-day event last month, Franciscan Fr. Dan Horan gives a nice summary in a recent episode of "The Francis Effect." This week's episode, released today, is covers the upcoming synod on youth and young people, the shooting of Stephon Clark and discussion of mental health issues.

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