Opinion



by Michael Sean Winters

View Author Profile

Follow on Twitter at @michaelswinters

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

April 5, 2018

Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

At Medium, Carolyn Davis of the Public Religion Research Institute writes about the shape and future of youth activism. I found it startling that the #1 reason young people cite for not getting involved is that they do not think they know enough about a given subject. That is a reason that can be remedied!

At Commonweal, Carlo Lancellotti writes about on Augusto Del Noce's critique of modern politics and whether the left is at a dead end. I do not buy the entirety of Del Noce's critique: As a general rule, I am more and more suspicious of these sweeping accounts of the Western decline. Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West* was published in 1918, and it seems we get a similar set of tomes every decade. But we live at a time when self-criticism is not much in vogue, so it is good to confront criticisms like those leveled here. And his insight about Marxism disintegrating into relativism is worth the price of admission.

Mohammed bin Salman, the crown prince of Saudi Arabia, asserted the right of the Jewish people to their own homeland. In the world of Mideast diplomacy, that is the kind of a priori acknowledgement that makes an eventual peace possible. I knew I liked this guy. The Washington Post and New York Times have the story about the

interview by The Atlantic.

More bad news on the environment: 10 percent of coastal glaciers in Antarctica are in retreat. Next month will be the third anniversary of *Laudato Si'*, in which Pope Francis called for urgent action to protect the planet. Is anyone observing much urgency?

Advertisement

If you have not seen the PBS Series "Black America Since MLK: And Still I Rise," check it out. Henry Louis Gates Jr. is such a deft scholar, but his other gifts are on display in making this series work, such as his skill as an interviewer. The latest episode featured his conversation with William Julius Wilson, who was once vilified by other black scholars for attending to other causes of social dysfunction besides racism. The interview is remarkable, not least because Gates acknowledges that Wilson was right all along to look at the variety of socio-economic factors that afflicted some black communities in the 1970s and '80s. The show is subtle and masterful and powerful, all at the same time. Gates, like Wilson, never let political concerns dictate his research, and they are both of them gems of an academy that is in need of some luster.

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

Editor's note: Don't miss out on Michael Sean Winters' latest: Sign up to receive free newsletters, and we'll notify you when he publishes new Distinctly Catholic columns.