Opinion



by Michael Sean Winters

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The Susan B. Anthony List, a pro-Republican group that pretends to be a pro-life group, has announced that President Donald Trump will be speaking at its annual gala next week. The head of the Susan B. Anthony List, Marjorie Dannenfelser, recently criticized Pope Francis for sowing confusion when his apostolic exhortation, *Gaudete et Exsultate*, said confronting social justice issues was as sacred as confronting the infamy of abortion. Indeed, her comments are an almost textbook example of how right-wing politicians have mangled and distorted Catholic moral theology to suit their own ends. At a time when this administration is threatening immigrant mothers that they will be separated from their children, no Catholic leader should be present at next week's ceremony, and that includes staff of the U.S. bishops' conference.

In the Journal on Migration and Human Security, a report indicates that as many as 2 million undocumented Americans likely qualify for legal status but either do not know it or could not afford the legal costs needed to go through the process. The authors of the report, Jeanne Atkinson of Catholic Legal Immigration Network (CLINIC) and Tom Wong of the University of California at San Diego, recommend screening for undocumented immigrants and the provision of additional free legal

services. How many Catholic universities have law schools? How many offer courses on immigration law? Of course, we need a comprehensive solution to the immigration issue, but in the meantime, the Catholic Church and its intellectual infrastructure should retrofit to help these migrants.

At America, the editors rightly wonder why the protests in Puerto Rico — and indeed the on-going crisis there more generally — have not garnered more public attention. They are correct in asserting that the proposed austerity measures make no sense and instead invite a "death spiral." But the editors make a point of noting that the financial control board is "unelected," repeating a canard of certain leftie critics of the legislation Congress passed to deal with the crisis. The board is indeed unelected, and the measures they approved last month are wrong-headed, but that is because they were following the lead of the elected governor of the island. Last year, the board was set to approve a far more generous package of debt relief *before* the hurricane hit. Gov. Ricardo Rosselló has used the crisis to push the unrelated issue of statehood, and now his proposed austerity measures make no sense — unless he is looking for a job at a hedge fund when his term is up.

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At Politico, the stuff of nightmares: Hillsdale College wants to "take over" Washington. The author, Alice Lloyd, charges that the rightwing Christian school is playing a long game for influence, but I would suggest that the limits of the Hillsdale approach are self-imposed: The intellectual rigidity of their approach is self-limiting, devoid of suppleness.

Next time you think that all the corrupting influence of money happens on the right and is usually linked to the Koch brothers, think again. Politico has a story about the divisions within Wellstone Action, a political organizing group set up after the late senator's untimely death (Paul Wellstone 1944-2002). Members of the Wellstone family have been kicked off the board after expressing concern that the organization was increasingly focused on gender and racial issues instead of the socio-economic issues the senator championed. But, and this is a big but, the Ford Foundation and George Soros' Open Society Foundations stepped up to say that they continued to support the organization and its new focus. And people wonder how Trump won.

From the Chicago Metropolitan Planning Council: how to begin addressing the entrenched racism in the city's civic, economic and demographic structures. If you watch the video, you will see it begins with a familiar face! The whole report is important in that it shows how multi-faceted the challenges are.

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

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