Opinion
News



by Michael Sean Winters

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Stephanie Wilkinson, the owner of the Red Hen restaurant in Lexington, Virginia, explains her decision to ask Sarah Huckabee Sanders to leave her restaurant: "I would have done the same thing again," she told the Washington Post. "We just felt there are moments in time when people need to live their convictions. This appeared to be one." Many on the right decried the eviction as a sign of bad manners or worse. Just remember this: Huckabee Sanders spent the week defending separating children from their parents, and Wilkinson only separated Huckabee Sanders from her entrée. I found Wilkinson's straight-forward moral clarity refreshing.

Yesterday, I called attention to Cardinal Blase Cupich's blistering statement on the separation of children from their parents at the border. Here he is discussing the issue on local television. The money quote occurs when he is asked about Attorney General Jeff Sessions' invocation of scripture to justify the no tolerance policy and consequent separation of children at the border. The cardinal explains the rest of Romans 13 and then brings down the hammer: "The Attorney General should stay in his lane." Ouch.

At America, theology professor Tobias Winright, pens an open letter to ICE officials, encouraging them not to follow unjust orders and reminding them that they take an oath to uphold the Constitution, not to any specific person or policy. Normally, such a caution would worry me: We would not want ever a cop thinking they can decide what the Constitution does and does not dictate, but these are not normal times. Winwright is a former law enforcement officer — who knew? — so his argument has an experiential authority that most of us lack.

I am not much of a fan of podcasts, but this one at "Stuff You Missed in History Class" about the consequences of a hurricane that hit Puerto Rico in 1898 — shortly after the U.S. invasion — explains some fascinating and depressing history.

How nervous are conservatives that their movement has crumbled under the force of Trumpism? George Will, in the Washington Post, speculates on whether or not libertarian Bill Weld, the Boston Brahmin and former governor of the Commonwealth, can save conservatism. You will recall that Will's ambition was to rehabilitate Edmund Burke in American politics, and Burke would be appalled by libertarianism.

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Speaking of the state of conservatism, I cannot fail to note the death of Charles Krauthammer, the former speechwriter for Walter Mondale who became one of the leading conservative public intellectuals in our time. I knew Krauthammer from his days at The New Republic and always appreciated his intellectual rigor even when we reached wildly different conclusions, which happened often. There was a rigidity to his thought, an unwillingness to accept that ideas change, and must change, as they are applied to the real world, but he was no hypocrite as too many Washington, D.C.-based intellectuals are or become. The fact that he overcame his physical burdens with such rigor and with an utter lack of self-pity was a heroic fact. May he rest in peace.

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

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