Opinion

News



Sr. Norma Pimentel, executive director of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley in Texas, speaks to an audience July 1 as she shows a delegation of U.S. bishops a respite center for new immigrant arrivals in McAllen, Texas. (CNS/Chaz Muth)



by Michael Sean Winters

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The face of the church to contemporary U.S. culture is quickly becoming Sr. Norma Pimentel of Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Brownsville, Texas. This profile of the Missionaries of Jesus sister by Karen Tumulty in The Washington Post is one of many that highlight her wonderful work. I submit that if everyone in the church had this woman's heart, our churches would still be full.

Maybe the Supreme Court should have interviewed this former spokesman at the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency before voting on *Hawaii* v. *Trump*: He said he could not defend Attorney General Jeff Sessions giving a "flat-out lie" about immigration raids in Oakland, California. People who have something to hide are the ones who tend to lie.

As President Donald Trump prepares to nominate a Supreme Court justice, and the name of Judge Amy Coney Barrett is making the rounds, it is good to go back and read Laurie Goodstein's article that focused on Barrett's membership in a charismatic group called People of Praise. Whatever you think of some of its practices, and I do not think much, the fact that the group scrubbed its website of information about Barrett indicates that someone figured out this might be a problem. More on this tomorrow.

At Politico, a look at several issues, in addition to abortion, on which the retirement of Justice Anthony Kennedy could spell a change in the law. Of special concern to Catholics is the fact that Kennedy occasionally recognized limits on imposing the death penalty and his successor might not.

At Angelus News, Michelle La Rosa demonstrates how many in the pro-life community are cut off from political reality. She writes, "Making abortion illegal is an important goal, and a critical first step for building a culture of life. But it's a first step." If it is to be effective, making abortion illegal will come at the end of a long process of education and cultural advocacy, not when you flip one vote on the

Supreme Court. And La Rosa cites Pope John Paul II's "theology of the body," which should be consigned to the history books and the sooner the better.

Watching House Republicans question Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein was not what you would call a civics class, more like civics for conspiracy theorists. Conservative commentator Jennifer Rubin examines just how extreme some of the questions were.

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Speaking of conspiracy theorists, this op-ed in The Washington Times makes the assertion that President Barack Obama really did not want to defeat the Islamic State group and labels the former president a "Manchurian Candidate." I had my problems with Obama, but this?

In The Washington Post, a fine analysis of the Supreme Court's decision in *Janus* from Elizabeth Bruenig, who is emerging as one of the most thoughtful op-ed writers at the Post. The opening nails the problem: "There are different kinds of freedom particular to different kinds of things. To flourish, people need the freedom that enables us to be the way we are: social, creative, communicative. In the Supreme Court's latest blow to organized labor, that kind of freedom has been bought and scrapped by businesspeople who cloaked the transaction in the language of liberty." Splendid writing.

At Politico, a look back at Trump's goal to develop "Trump City" back in the 1980s. This kind of grandiose approach to urban planning has a long and ugly history as a characteristic of totalitarian regimes, so we should not be surprised by one more piece of evidence that we should be vigilant.

[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.