Opinion

by Dennis Coday

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Kim Davis, a Rowan County, Kentucky, clerk, celebrates her release Sept. 8, 2015, from the Carter County Detention center in Grayson, Kentucky. (CNS/Reuters/Chris Tilley)

Here's some articles we posted over the weekend that you don't want to miss:

- Vatican City -- A tale of competing narratives. **Viganò, Vatican spokesmen dispute facts of pope meeting Kim Davis**

- Michael Sean Winters offers the inside story of of Viganò and Kim Davis: **Viganò's latest statement part of concerted campaign to attack papacy**
- On the plane back from Dublin Aug. 26, Pope Francis told journalists that **"I will not say a single word on this,"** the letter from Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò. Yesterday as he resumed his early morning Masses at Casa Santa Marta, Francis said that Jesus himself showed that **the best way to respond to scandal and divisiveness is to stay silent and pray**.

"Yes, I'm going to be at church on Sunday. That's where I've always been." **Young Catholics stay to fight for church reform in wake of scandals**

A couple weeks ago, we ran an essay (**The 'New Ultramontanists': Why do some Catholics fear change?**) by Brian Flanagan that compared the slugfest over papal infalliblity before the First Vatican Council in 1869 and today's opposition to Pope Francis' reform agenda, noting that "in both periods, it was journalists who promoted these views with the most energy and effectiveness, rather than academic theologians or even, at first, most clerics or bishops. After reading the two articles I linked to below, I more convinced than ever that Flanagan is on to something.

Conservative media move to front line of battle to undermine Pope Francis
A series of Reuters interviews that reveal a union of conservative clergy and media aimed at what papal defenders say is a campaign to weaken the reformist Francis's pontificate.

Former Vatican ambassador's explosive letter reveals influence of conservative Catholic media network Much like the way in which Breitbart News and Drudge Report have served as media conduits for the brand of conservative American populism led by President Trump, conservative Catholic media outlets have become power players by conveying the anti-Francis point of view, this time becoming part of the story, as well.

Lincoln, Nebraska -- For more than a decade, a conservative Catholic diocese in Nebraska was the only church in the U.S. that refused to participate in annual reviews of sexual misconduct that were a key reform enacted in the wake of the 2002 Boston clergy abuse scandal. **Nebraska Catholic diocese rocked by old abuse allegations** Is the Diocese of Lincoln paying the price for its unwillingness to change and lack of transparency?

New Jersey State Senator **calls on state attorney general to empanel grand jury to investigate sexual misconduct in Catholic dioceses in New Jersey**. "Given the wide scope of abuse found in Pennsylvania and the Vatican's action against McCarrick, we must investigate now," he said.

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The Buffalo, New York, Diocese has tightened security inside its Main Street headquarters, **as officials try to unravel how a television reporter obtained secret clergy files.** The diocese posted security guards at the doors to the headquarters, changed locks, set up a video camera and brought in a computer expert to install encryption software on email accounts.

A profile in The Jerusalem Post of the Pennsylvania state attorney general Josh Shapiro says he is **rooted in a Jewish community that helped shape his values and sense of service.**

And other news that we are following:

Judge Brett M. Kavanaugh will appear before the Senate Judiciary Committee today for the first day of his confirmation hearing before Congress votes on his nomination for the Supreme Court. **What to Watch: The First Day of Judge Kavanaugh's Confirmation Hearings**

'Sparks will fly' at Senate confirmation hearing for Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh

New York Times columnists Frank Bruni and Ross Douthat have a conversation about many things: the midterm elections, Judge Kavanaugh and at the end **they discuss celibacy and the Catholic priesthood.**

The political landscape for the midterm elections favors Democrats in general and women candidates in particular, a new USA TODAY/Suffolk University Poll finds, **raising the prospect of significant perils for President Trump with the next Congress.**

Warsaw, Poland -- The leader of Poland's conservative ruling party, whose policies have led to clashes with European Union leaders, said Sunday he wants the country

to remain in the EU **so it can become like western European nations "in every respect."**

A Test of Faith: Being Gay in the Catholic Church Iowa Public Radio talks with Joe Jennison, who wrote the one-man show "Confessions of a Gay Catholic." (H/T Bondings 2.0 blog.)

Pope Francis' exhortation **Gaudete et Exsultate ("Rejoice and Be Glad")** has inspired many. NCR and Celebration have the resources to help you on your **journey of 'small holiness'**.

- Start your day inspired with daily Scripture reflections. Join NCR's sister publication, Celebration, for **Daily Bread**, a series of short reflections written by four authors who meet regularly to share the readings.
- Or reflect on **Pencil Preaching by Pat Marrin**. Every morning Pat Marrin breaks open the Word with a pencil sketch and a short meditation.