Opinion
News



by Michael Sean Winters

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Last Friday was the second anniversary of my father's death and I miss him very much. He was always at his happiest when one thing happened — and it happened again Tuesday night: The Red Sox beat the Yankees in the playoffs. Go Sox!

God bless John Gehring for putting up with all those plutocrats at these "Principled Entrepreneurship" conferences co-sponsored by Tim Busch's Napa Institute and the Tim & Steph Busch School of Business at Catholic University and sharing his report at Commonweal with the rest of us. I did not know that the phrase itself was trademarked by Koch Industries. The Koch brothers also fund efforts to restrict voting rights by making it harder for poor people, especially minorities, to vote, so when the bishops get round to discussing racism, they can explain how they let their own university become so cozy with the fat cats who do so much to disenfranchise minority voters.

In the New York Times, a great op-ed by Jane McAlevey on how the lessons from winning union elections should be employed in regular elections too. Her opening point about the way powerful interests use futility as a tool, encouraging people to

get frustrated with the election itself, wanting it to be over, that alone was worth the price of admission. But, her point about engaging the people who waver and not just preaching to the choir is something Republicans learned better than Democrats. Nancy Pelosi's district is so blue, it is all choir. The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee hires the same consultants who spread the same lazy lies about the efficacy of their direct mail or media programs, but McAlevey shows how wrong that assumption is too. Just a great article.

I am trying to decide if J.D. Flynn is genuinely obtuse or just wants us to think so? In his latest essay at the National Catholic Register, the editor-in-chief at the Catholic News Agency apparently thinks it is a coincidence that those who criticized *Amoris Laetitia* are the same people and bishops who praised Viganò's integrity and candor. He wants us to notice he is trying to be even-handed, and I commend him for calling out the alt-Catholic Right. But, as we have now entered autumn, surely it is obvious that one of the principal causes of this summer's meltdown is that so many bishops in Pennsylvania previously failed to publish the names of those credibly accused of molesting children. Yet, oddly, in his fretting about how eager the U.S. bishops are to confront the problem, and how Rome is always ten steps behind, he fails to mention this one step that every bishop could do on his own authority and have it done by the end of the year.

Last week I complained about the degree to which graduates of elite, especially Ivy League, schools seem to dominate all aspects of American life, and we don't seem much the better for it. A friend who graduated from Yale wished to remind me about this story at The Intercept about how graduates of those schools also dominate the world of journalism. I concur and think it is as much or more of a problem in the newsroom.

Another stupid approach to enacting pro-life legislation, this time in Oregon. Knowing they will lose on the merits, pro-life groups are arguing that the state should not pay for Medicaid abortions because it costs too much money. This is the kind of unprincipled approach that does the cause a disservice. There are compelling reasons not to permit taxpayer-funded abortions, and this is not one of them. Politico has the story.

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At the Catholic Herald, I enjoyed this fun little piece on titular sees. I like the fact that the church can maintain useful fictions such as titular sees, and justify the practice with the reminder that in the eternal mind of God, there is no time and so once a bishopric, always a bishopric. Far more sinister are those priests who have never spent any time in the dioceses for which they were ordained, and you know who you are!

In The Washington Post, a report on cost overruns for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. No one is surprised. The International Olympic Committee pretends it is seeking solutions, but how many additional cities in the world need a velodrome? There is a very obvious solution: Return the Olympics to Athens on a permanent basis. They built all the facilities for the Games in 2004. Some venues would need to be repaired, but the influx of tourist dollars every four years would provide some much needed cash to the Greek economy. I suspect top ranked athletes would frequent the venues in between games to be familiar with them when the Games actually commence.

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

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