Opinion
News



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Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell is nothing if not predictable. Last year, the Republicans passed huge tax cuts for the wealthy. They promised that the tax cuts would pay for themselves. This year, of course, it became evident that the tax cuts did not pay for themselves and, instead, exploded the federal deficit. The solution? Cut entitlement programs for struggling Americans. If the American people fall for this again, it is time to find a new country.

In the New York Times, Naomi Oreskes and Eric Conway on the need for "the visible hand of government" in confronting the climate emergency our planet is now facing. They argue that private sector technological innovations will not be sufficient to cope with the problem just as key parts of the technological transformations wrought by the industrial revolution often needed the government to step in and address those aspects of the problem the market could not solve, e.g. rural electrification.

At America, Jesuit Fr. John Conley writes about the controversy surrounding a lecture against abortion at the Catholic University of Louvain. I sympathize with the need for

Catholics to get a little more stiff-necked in defending our teaching, and certainly our right to expound that teaching, free from insane charges of misogyny and the like. But, Conley is one of those writers who consistently steps on his own argument. He writes, "But if abortion is not a species of homicide, why would anyone oppose it?" St. Thomas Aquinas, of course, considered abortion a species of manslaughter if it was procured before quickening. More importantly, the key difference between murder and manslaughter is intent, and I do not know if most women think they are killing a child when they procure an abortion, and neither does Conley. Bad arguments do not help the cause.

You can't only blame President Donald Trump. In what is truly an assault on the foundations of democracy, Republicans in both Georgia and North Dakota are seeking to suppress the vote of poor minorities who tend to vote Democratic. In Georgia, the current Secretary of State, whose job it is to oversee elections and promote voter participation, is also the GOP candidate for governor so instead of promoting voting, he is enforcing new rules that will restrict it. In North Dakota, the Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal of a lower court ruling that let stand a new law that was obviously aimed at suppressing the vote of Native Americans. These tactics are straight from the playbook for the Koch-funded American Legislative Exchange Council which drafts legislation to advance the group's goals. Where is the outrage? I have conscientious Republican friends, lawyers even, people who teach at Catholic law schools. Where is *their* outrage? The bishops are supposed to be examining racism. Where is *their* outrage?

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Why does Trump have such a thing for conservative Catholic lawyers? Incoming White House Counsel Pat Cipollone is on the board of directors of Opus Dei's Catholic Information Center in downtown Washington, D.C. And he is one of the founders of the National Catholic Prayer Breakfast, an annual rightwing confab that brings together rich and powerful conservative Catholics, flies in a rightwing prelate to say Mass — Cardinal Raymond Burke did the honors the year I attended — and everybody shows cleavage to Leonard Leo of the Federalist Society. The whole thing is disgusting. And this guy started it? Maybe he has finally found the client he deserves. To top it all off, he is the spiritual mentor to Laura Ingraham, the race-baiting, Trump-loving, xenophobic, darling of the right, who has a show on Fox.

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

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