Opinion

News



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When The Washington Post hired Glenn Kessler as its fact checker some years back, no one could have predicted how badly he would be needed. Kessler devised a ranking system for political BS, rating lies on a scale of from one to four Pinocchios. Then came Trump and, now, Kessler has unveiled a fifth prize for lies that are not only total bunk, but that are repeated again and again: the Bottomless Pinocchio.

Also in The Washington Post, Democrats pledge to use their new control of the House of Representatives to investigate the Fiscal Control Board overseeing debt restructuring in Puerto Rico. Hard to know if the board is merely dense or if they are corrupt, but the plan to relieve the island's debt got worse, not better, after Hurricane Maria hit, so the board should be made to explain itself.

At Millennial, Marcus Mescher looks at the immigration issue and how it is misused by our president and his party and his religious collaborators to gin up a manufactured fear.

At Snopes, a fact check on the claims made at LifeSiteNews that Facebook had censored an image of Santa kneeling at the crib of Jesus. Turns out the image has been on Facebook in multiple locations for years. Yes, for reasons not yet clear, one such image had superimposed over it a warning sign about "violent or graphic content." Facebook said an automated system resulted in the mistake. I disagree. I do not think it is a mistake. The image of Santa kneeling before the crib does violence to the Gospel of Luke. It is offensive.

Speaking of stupid Christmas War memes, Fox News took a fit of the vapors after a Massachusetts parish placed Jesus and the Wise Men behind a fence in its crèche and placed a question mark at the end of the phrase "Peace on Earth." My only complaint about the crèche is that I did not think of it first. Kudos to the pastor.

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At Commonweal, they spent more ink than necessary examining Patrick Deneen's latest book, but one essay is especially worthwhile, that by Commonweal's own Matt Sitman. His argument is spot-on and, what is more, he delivered, just in time, a candidate for best line of 2018: "From Locke to 'Lock Her Up.' "

Do we need more evidence we should not turn to celebrities, be they actors or athletes or comedians, to stray too far from their areas of expertise? Why should I care what Meryl Streep thinks about politics any more than I can expect Nancy Pelosi to play, convincingly, Kay Graham, Margaret Thatcher and Julia Child? Well, if you need convincing, here is The New York Times explaining that Golden State Warriors point guard and NBA All-Star Stephen Curry thinks the moon landing was a hoax.

At the always-invaluable Working-Class Perspectives blog, Allison Hurst looks at who will pay the cost of climate change, and who won't. If you guessed that working-class people and the poor will pay a disproportionate share of the cost, you guessed right. The, ahem, money quote:

> Climate change is a war against the poor. One could argue that selfishness, greed, and capitalism have got us into this mess. We may never be able to get out of it. The human race may not be saved. But how we choose to deal with its consequences, whether we let the rich build bunkers and fly to the moon, or we work together to protect, shelter, and welcome those hit first, well, that may decide whether we are worth saving at all.

Lastly, a video of "GOP Jesus" that needs no introduction:

[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.*