Opinion

News



U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg speaks Sept. 12, 2016, at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana. (CNS/University of Notre Dame/Matt Cashore)



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December 27, 2018

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Nothing warms the heart in these cold winter nights like the discovery that a person doing something very bad is being exposed as a fraud. Brian Kolfage, the veteran who started a GoFundMe page to raise money to build a border wall between the U.S. and Mexico, previously trafficked in conspiracy theories so outrageous, he got kicked off of Facebook. Business Insider has the story.

What is the most dangerous thing facing the Left? Anti-Semitism. This article in the New York Times about infighting among the first organizers of the women's march shows how the Left can fall into the rabbit hole of tribalism as well as the right, and with consequences that are just as ugly. Remember, liberals, that the universalism of your aspirations is what keeps you from this kind of evil. Forget it at the peril of your souls.

Finally, an editorial board at a mainstream media site is willing to draw distinctions in the face of an Attorney General's grandstanding on clergy sex abuse: The editorial board at the Chicago Tribune rightly faults out-going Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan for issuing a "report" on clergy sex abuse that is heavy on the sweeping generalizations and light on the specifics. What purpose did this ten-page dossier serve? It surely will not make children any safer.

In the Georgia Bulletin, Archbishop Wilton Gregory on the sex abuse crisis. Gregory led the USCCB in 2002 when the conference adopted the Dallas Charter for the Protection of Minors. He rightly notes that the proposals put before the bishops at their meeting last November would not have been adopted even if the Vatican had not prevented a vote on them.

If the holidays have you blue, and that black hole of narcissism in the White House makes you depressed or worse, Vox highlights some positive trends in the world, including lowering poverty rates, more affordable sustainable energy, declining child mortality and more prevention of preventable diseases like malaria.

The New York Times' columnist David Brooks is to op-ed writing what overcooked pasta to cuisine: Flaccid but still tasty. In this column, praising the Niskanen Center for its purported shedding of ideological blinders and embracing the idea that a free market economy and a robust welfare state go hand in hand, he misses the degree to which their analysis still depends almost exclusively on economic valuations of human flourishing. And, the hostility to government regulation is understandable but also misplaced. I am glad these folks are now former libertarians, but they still have a long row to hoe before they warrant applause.

At Politico, Jack Shafer on the foolhardy boycott of Tucker Carlson's Fox TV show by some big name brands. Carlson, who is obnoxious on a good day, said immigrants make America "poorer and dirtier" on one of his bad days. It was a disgusting thing to say. But, do we really want to encourage corporate America to think it has the power to censor the press? Liberals fought censorship laws as they applied to government censors. We should be just as suspicious of the corporate variety.

Also at Politico, and on the subject of bad liberal behavior, Peter Canelos questions the cult of Ruth Bader Ginsburg. I couldn't agree more and I like her, even though I am less of a fan of her jurisprudence. I could not disagree with her more on seeing the right to an abortion as the essence of, rather than an insult to, female equality. In any event, the money quote:

> Anyone who was discomfited by the notion of ideologically supercharged young conservatives praising Scalia for creating a new individual right to bear arms should probably think twice before donning their RBG T-shirts at the next abortion-rights march — or bursting into applause at her next triumphant cinematic moment. These efforts to show popular support and approval for a heroic liberal judge might feel energizing for progressives, but they also remove any sense of stigma or impropriety from conservatives' far more effective efforts to provide a support network for "their kind" of justices — a movement so aggressive it handed Trump a list of approved high-court nominees before he was even elected president.

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

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