Opinion



A man in Tijuana, Mexico, holds his son Jan. 3 next to a section of the wall separating Mexico and the United States. (CNS/Reuters/Mohammed Salem)



by Michael Sean Winters

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Msgr. James Moroney who, having foisted upon the church a translation of the Roman Missal, dreadful and opaque, we beseech you now, in light of your departure, known to us through an article in The Boston Pilot, from St. John's seminary, explain to us exactly what was consubstantial about your tenure as rector so that we, God's people, may, through the inspiration of dewfall and divine grace, come to know the truth of this, and every other related matter, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

In light of the president's ridiculous speech — fact-checked immediately by Politico — it is good to recall Greg Sargent's Jan. 2 column in The Washington Post in which he analyzed why the wall is so important to Trump's evangelical base. Hard to know if this is simply a foreseeable consequence of an ecclesial tradition that lacks theological sophistication or the conflation of political categories into religious ones, or both, but no matter the source, it never ceases to appall.

At The New Yorker, John Cassidy warns against underestimating Elizabeth Warren. The money quote:

> Indeed, in many ways she is a modern version of a prairie populist, inveighing against the trusts, the plutocrats, and their corrupt political allies. Like William Jennings Bryan and Robert La Follette before her, Warren makes economic arguments, lots of them, but the essence of her case is an ethical one: many aspects of modern American capitalism and democracy are fundamentally immoral, and, therefore, indefensible.

More on Warren's candidacy either later this week or early next week.

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Speaking of politics, as Democrats prepare to make their case, they could do worse than consult each week, as I do, the Working Class Perspectives blog published by the Kalmanovitz Initiative at Georgetown University. For example, this week, John Russo and Sherry Linkon look at the arguments from some quarters that sought to blame the workers and their communities for the decision by General Motor's

management to close some plants and move those jobs overseas. Unsurprisingly, it is upper middle class liberals who join the chorus and even write the lyrics! And, then, on election night, they are surprised when Democrats can't win Ohio and Michigan. Back to the plot: The Working Class Perspectives blog is always thoughtful, well researched and accessible to all. It should be required reading for the staffs of 2020 Democratic candidates.

In The New York Times, a report on how carbon emissions soared last year, not because Trump rejuvenated the coal industry, but because increased economic activity — more cars on the roads and more planes in the air — led to more carbon in the environment. What can each of us do, in our station in life, to use less carbon? It is a question we all need to ask ourselves.

At Foreign Policy, the ACLU has joined lawsuits that seek to overturn state laws that require contractors to pledge they will not participate in boycotts of divestment campaigns aimed at Israel. I oppose the BDS movement (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) with every fiber of my being. It reflects all the worst instincts of the left. But laws that seek to coerce companies in this way reflect precisely the kind of illiberalism that is self-defeating for those of us who care about liberalism and, consequently, are champions of Israel. The ACLU gets a lot right and a lot wrong. This they get right.

I have not been linking to stories about the Robert Mueller investigation. But on Tuesday, the court filings against Paul Manafort were stunning and came as close as anything we have seen so far to providing clear evidence of collusion between the Trump campaign and the Russian government. As I read about the news, I had the idea that Mueller may be a fan of Alfred Hitchcock movies, or may have excelled in a course on psychological warfare: The indictment of Trump is coming out drip by drip, the walls are closing in, we all know the murderer is at the top of the stairs but the protagonist seems not to, etc.

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

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