Opinion
News



People attend a demonstration in Paris Feb. 19 to protest the rise of anti-Semitic attacks. (CNS/Reuters/Philippe Wojazer)



by Michael Sean Winters

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The most consequential address about cleaning up the clergy sex abuse mess may not have been spoken in the aula at the Vatican's summit. It might be this column by Cardinal Joseph Tobin of Newark, New Jersey, about why a listening, synodal church can change, and linking the need to listen to victims today with the church's engagement with Jews after World War II. That engagement led to *Nostra Aetate*, in which the church's teaching was very clearly reformed, and reformed by bishops.

Relatedly, this article from Catholic News Service details the French bishops standing up against rising anti-Semitism in France. Think about this for a minute. The country of Dreyfus, and Laval, and Carpentras, this country's bishops are now standing up against, instead of fomenting, anti-Semitism.

At Nineteen Sixty-Four, the blog of the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, a look at how the geography of Catholic life in this country has been changing, with parishes in the Midwest and Northeast closing, and new churches being built in the South and West. A combination of flight to the suburbs and loss of numbers accounts for the drop-off, and Latino immigration is the largest reason for the growth. The number that most jumped out at me was 12,639 — the average number of Catholics in a typical parish in Nevada.

Editors have a basic responsibility not to print something they know to be untrue. Then how did Crux publish this article based on an interview with Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz? The former priest secretary to St. Pope John Paul II defends the late pontiff's indefensible record on clergy sex abuse. And how do you interview Dziwisz and not ask him about the *bustarellas* he received from the likes of Theodore McCarrick and Marcial Maciel?

Mark Silk, at RNS, on the role of religious leaders in facing the climate change challenge. He has some keen insights about the Green New Deal, and notes that politicians these days are unlikely to preach austerity, but certainly prophetic witness should be in the wheelhouse of our religious leaders, no?

At Politico, Matthew Dallek looks at the unhappy track record of challengers to an incumbent president. I think he fails to see the significance of a primary challenger within the incumbent's party — think Ted Kennedy in 1980 and Pat Buchanan in

1992 — but the penultimate line of his article is spot-in:

> Democrats will need someone skilled at tapping people's frustration with politics, someone credible on the central question of income inequality, someone who can speak to the party's future rather than someone beholden to its past.

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In The Washington Post, E.J. Dionne looks back to New York Gov. Nelson Rockefeller's address to the 1964 GOP convention and forward to the forthcoming vote in the Senate on a resolution to rescind President Donald Trump's "emergency declaration" regarding the border and wonders what happened to the Republican Party. I would also note that it is a measure of how morally and intellectually corrupt our politics have become under Trump that one has to put the words "national emergency" in quotation marks.

And, in The New York Times, Paul Krugman makes the kinds of links Democratic candidates need to make between economic policy and family values. It is true: I know many social workers who will tell you that in all their years of working with struggling families, they have never heard someone struggling say the problem is gay marriage. The problems may not be rooted in economic hardship, but economic hardship makes all problems more difficult to resolve.

Not depressed enough? Here is the list of the top 100 most overpaid CEOs according to the group As You Sow. This list put me in mind of this song, from Gilbert and Sullivan's "The Mikado," with the "society offenders" updated:

[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 and we'll let you know when he publishes new Distinctly Catholic columns.*