Opinion



U.S. Capitol, Washington, Feb. 5 (CNS/Tyler Orsburn)



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It is a delight to be able to commend, rather than criticize, an article in the National Catholic Register. But this column by John Clark explains to conservative Catholic readers that, yes, Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's call for a living wage is a staple of Catholic social teaching.

Sen. Elizabeth Warren has announced that her campaign will not conduct high-dollar fundraisers where well-heeled donors get special access to the candidate or her campaign staff. Politico has the story. In this flu season, let's hope her example catches, and not just in politics. Wouldn't it be great if bishops no longer had to go to fancy dinners with fat-cat donors and listen to them?

Also at Politico, a look at how Sen. Bernie Sanders reached out to Trump voters in Monday night's town hall on CNN. It is so important that Democrats remember how many voters backed Barack Obama twice and then supported Donald Trump. They are still looking for someone who will bring change, which is why candidates running solely on their résumé will have no chance at winning. This campaign is going to be about rewriting the economic rules, not least because Trump betrayed the voters who thought he really would help restore the industrial heartland.

At Working-Class Perspectives, Jack Metzgar looks at the Medicare for All proposal and reminds progressive policy makers that they always need to provide for a just transition for those workers who will be impacted by such large scale changes. This is also the case with the Green New Deal. Too many policy experts have no idea what life is like for the average Jane and Joe and forget that just as every cloud has a silver lining, every silver lining has a cloud.

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I believe that some Democrats are extreme in their positions on certain issues, but why is that Republican operatives go from zero to 60 on the crazy-o-meter so much faster, and in such a sinister way? USAToday reports on Jacob Wohl who spends his time spreading ugly lies on the internet and, sadly, a certain percentage of the electorate believe them.

New polling from Gallup shows some disturbing and some heartening dynamics among Democrats. According to this report at CNN, the party is becoming more educated, less white, less religious and more liberal. I wish the "less religious" was no there. But, further down, I found this interesting:

> There are places where the party still agrees almost completely, namely on stricter gun laws and labor unions, but breaks are seen on the issues of abortion and health care.

Democrats need to start paying attention to how the abortion issue hurts them with people who would otherwise be enthusiastic Democrats. I wish they would stand up to the pro-choice lobby and might have voted for the recent bill in the Senate to protect children born alive in a botched abortion, but don't lose too much sleep because the bill was not a serious attempt to find common ground. It was just another of those proposals, sometimes from the pro-life side and sometimes from the pro-choice side, designed to rile up the base and fill the coffers of the special interest groups. Still, standing up against infanticide shouldn't be a tough call.

At the Immanent Frame, Cathleen Kaveny has a really smart look at how secular law may shape — and has shaped — Catholic moral theology. She contends that a focus on chastity led clergy to think of sex abuse through the prism of the perpetrator, who had fallen from grace, but after more than $3 billion in payouts, justice has become a necessary focus of theological reflection.

Sometimes, it is hard not to conclude that the editors of The New York Times really are anti-Catholic. This editorial on clergy sex abuse fails to mention the 2002 Dallas Charter for the Protection of Minors and the positive effects it had on cracking down on clergy sex abuse. The editorial mentions the Pennsylvania grand jury report, without mentioning the thorough-going criticism of that report by the Times' longtime religion reporter Peter Steinfels. And they are a little too generous in referring to a press release from the out-going Attorney General of Illinois as "a report." And by the way, one of the reasons that the Vatican could not concoct a one-size-fits-all policy is that different countries have different laws regarding such matters as publishing the name of someone accused of a crime who has not been adjudicated in a civil court.

Church Times reports that the Archbishop of Canterbury reminded politicians in the U.K. that the strong, and not the weak, should bear the brunt of the risk as the

parliament evaluates what to do about Brexit. There was a time when Catholic religious leaders in this country said similar things.

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

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