Opinion

News



People in Beauregard, Alabama, stand in front of crosses March 6, to honor the victims who died in the two tornadoes. (CNS/Reuters/Shannon Stapleton)



by Michael Sean Winters

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March 12, 2019

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President Donald Trump is unloading on conservative pundit Ann Coulter. She is one of the commentators on the right who was always most aligned with Trump's immigrant bashing, long before it became standard GOP fare. The fact that these two are fighting puts me in mind of a line at the end of a "Law & Order" episode in which various mob figures had turned state's evidence on each other: assistant district attorney Jamie Ross turns to district attorney Jack McCoy and says, "In the end, they all rat each other out." Punto.

At Pacific Standard, Jared Keller looks at the data from a recent survey by the Public Religion Research Institute and The Atlantic. If every cloud has a silver lining, I hope liberals will read his conclusion — that conservative Republicans have adopted identity politics and used it for their own ends — and decide to rid ourselves of this noxious analytical meme.

At Commonweal, Paul Moses tackles the corporate welfare represented by Amazon's sweetheart deal to locate in New York City, a deal that created an unlikely, and very temporary, alliance between U.S. Rep. Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) and the editorial board at the Wall Street Journal. Moses also points out the unexplained about face by the editorial board at the New York Times. Moses neglected to mention one of the principal reasons these sweetheart deals are pursued and agreed: The companies that benefit tend to become corporate donors for the politicians who support them. The so-called "tax incentives" for major employers need to stop.

In the Washington Post, a report on Trump's visit to Alabama after that state was hit by hurricanes. The president autographed Bibles. On Twitter, someone said this was like Hannibal Lecter autographing cookbooks. Massimo Faggioli announced he would be autographing copies of the *Annuario Pontificio*. Any other great analogies?

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In the New York Times, Lawfare's Quinta Jurecic offers a guide of what to look for in the Mueller Report, breaking down the different controversial, and potentially illegal activities, about which we already know something based on previous indictments and other court filings. This is the most useful map of the wide-ranging investigation we have seen so far, and smack dab in the middle of all the different facets is a singular question: Why was everyone in the Trump organization lying about their contacts with the Russians?

Also at the Times, a look at Sen. Elizabeth Warren's (D-Mass.) proposal to break up the big tech giants. This is a proposal worthy of Teddy Roosevelt. I will venture a prediction that candidates who do not match Warren in bringing out fresh new policy ideas will get lost in the dust. Democrats do not merely want someone who channels resentment. They want someone who will fix what is broken about our politics, and it is not just Democrats. Some people voted for Trump for that very reason.

At Religion News Service, Jack Jenkins has a very smart early look at the potential for centrist Catholics and mainstream Protestants to remain key swing voters in the 2020 race. Trump's numbers have softened in both groups. The only thing I would have added is the word "ethnic." In the key Midwestern states that Hillary Clinton lost to Trump, all have significant Polish, Croatian or similar Eastern European neighborhoods where Clinton should have gone to address Trump's Russophilia. The only creepy part about the article? The picture: I would not want to cast my vote with a photo of Carl Anderson looking down at me!

From the U.S. bishops' conference, a short video about some of the work they support in Central and Eastern Europe. In many dioceses, the collection for the church in Central and Eastern Europe is on Ash Wednesday. I only know a little bit about the good work done by our bishops' conference in that part of the world, but what I know confirms that this work is extraordinary, helping people who kept the faith through years of persecution.

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

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