Opinion



by Michael Sean Winters

View Author Profile

Follow on Twitter at @michaelswinters

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

May 2, 2019
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

At FiveThirtyEight.com, an analysis of early polling which shows that, whether it is mostly based on name recognition or not, they are usually pretty predictive of the ultimate result. I am still skeptical, especially in a year like this when there are so many candidates in the field and the race is obviously so fluid.

For those of you on Twitter, be sure to link with Bishop John Stowe, of Lexington, Kentucky, who recently joined the Twittersphere. Stowe is a bishop in the very mold of Pope Francis and St. Francis, not least because he is a Conventual Franciscan.

At First Things, Professor Robert George states that Cardinal Joseph Tobin misrepresented what the Catholic Church teaches about what is, and is not, intrinsically disordered. Citing Jesuit Fr. James Martin, George correctly notes that the church does not and cannot describe a person as “disordered,” only an act or an inclination. But, if I may be permitted to come to the cardinal’s defense, the distinction is so commonly misunderstood that it has long since demonstrated itself to be a pastoral disaster. Further, a person’s sexual identity is a thing so close to their personhood, it is easy to see why people hear it as a rejection of their very person. George is right in a very technical sense, but the cardinal is correct

pastorally. And, if we have learned anything since the council, it is that an insistence on philosophic and theological niceties at the expense of pastoral solicitude is precisely what drives people away from the church.

Speaking of First Things, at Millennial, Daniel Petri takes aim at the recent manifesto by a group of conservative Christians that was published at the right-wing outlet. It appears one of the signatories had not bothered to read the thing before affixing his signature. If this is the best of the next generation of conservative Catholic writers and thinkers, things are looking up for the future of the Catholic Left.

Speaking of the Christian Left, at Commonweal Wesley Hill responds to the Nicholas Kristof interview with Serene Jones, president of Union Theological Seminary, and recounts how many of his mainline Protestant friends reacted same as I did: Jones' denial of the bodily resurrection shows a crimped concern for sophistication that is, in fact, a myopic rendering of the account to fit her own personal prejudices. It is the theological sin of so much of the '70s and '80s, and something clearly avoided by, among others, Jorge Mario Bergoglio, that people thought demythologize the central claim of the Christian faith, something, for example, Hans Küng refused to do in his *On Being a Christian*.

At the American Prospect, Leo Gerard details the long history of labor support for environmental policies that protect human beings and the planet we share, and also explains how environmental activists can and should enlist the support of organized labor in pursuing effective climate change policies. When the Green New Deal was launched, labor was not consulted. It is a mistake that needs to be rectified so that a common front can be presented to climate change deniers, especially the one who lives in the White House.

Fr. Jenkins, call your office. Thomas D. Williams was a longtime shill for serial pedophile Fr. Marcial Maciel. Now he shills for Steve Bannon's worldview. He has been writing for Breitbart for some time, spewing the nasty nationalism that has become that outlet's principal focus, and now attacking the Vatican and falsely charging it with globalism, as if there was not a whit of difference between Pope Francis and Angela Merkel. I note that Williams' Twitter feed still identifies him as a "2018 Visiting Research Scholar at Notre Dame University's Center for Ethics and Culture." Why Notre Dame would have lent its good name to this trafficker in Trumpian anti-Francis propaganda in the first place, I do not know, but it is now 2019 and someone should ask him to stop wrapping himself in the mantle of Notre

Dame.

[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.*

Advertisement