Opinion
News



by Michael Sean Winters

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From the "And we thought we had problems" file, The New York Times delivers a deep-dive into the seedy business and personal dealings of Jerry Falwell Jr., a "pool boy," a real estate investment in South Beach, and Michael Cohen. You couldn't make this stuff up.

At Cleveland.com, the president of the AFL-CIO, Richard Trumka, and Tim Burga, president of the Ohio AFL-CIO, explain why the new NAFTA still does not do enough for working people because many of its provisions are unenforceable. This is always one of the problems with these trade deals. For example, they will stipulate that workers can bring suit for unfair labor practices, but insist that the case be heard in a New York court. How are Mexican workers going to be able to find a good New York law firm? This deal fails to guarantee labor rights in a variety of ways, and it should not fool anyone: It is bad for workers throughout the hemisphere.

At Slate, Mark Joseph Stern on the fact that Bill Barr, our nation's attorney general, is now running interference for convicted felon Paul Manafort, pleading that Manafort not be sent to the jail at Rikers Island, but instead at a federal prison in New York

City. The good news? If Manafort is convicted in New York state court, there is nothing the president of his cronies can do about it. The bad news? Barr is more of a toady than any of us imagined.

At The Washington Post, David Byler gives a thumbnail history of how the pro-choice and pro-life camps sorted themselves into a partisan divide. I wish he had gone deeper and asked why both parties increasingly moved to embrace extreme positions held by very few people. Hint: Money and the increasing dominance of extremist activists among the people who staff campaigns and congressional offices. But, one thing that should always be noted in these kinds of articles: The idea that *Roe* v. *Wade* is what galvanized the religious right is bunk. It galvanized Catholics. Evangelicals did not really respond to *Roe*. They responded to Jimmy Carter's effort to deny tax exempt status to their schools unless they embraced racial integration. It was only after they jumped into politics that the "official narrative" of the Falwells et al. painted opposition to Roe as the tipping point.

In The Atlantic, Margaret Carlson on why people should be sure to leave a tip for their hotel maids. Recounting stories from her grandmother, who worked at the Hotel Washington, and with some apt comparisons of the work maids do to the work waiters do, Carlson's case should leave you never again making excuses for failing to tip those housekeepers who clean up our messes in a hotel.

Relatedly, at Working Class Perspectives, Michele Fazio, a professor at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, describes how her students learn about the frequent injustices faced by farmworkers, both abroad and here in the U.S. In the Diocese of Yakima, Washington, Bishop Joe Tyson has his seminarians work with migrant farmworkers during their summer break. When you make yourself a salad this summer, or order one at a restaurant, give thanks for our farmworkers.

[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.*

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