Opinion
News



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

June 25, 2019
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

At his Word on Fire blog, Bishop Robert Barron offered a decidedly weak response to those of us who questioned his comments about evangelization and, specifically, Jordan Peterson, at the U.S. bishops' conference meeting earlier this month. "But I was especially surprised, and more than a little amused, by the overheated response from some on the far-left end of the spectrum," Barron writes. "It appears that the mere mention of the name Jordan Peterson is enough to send some into irrational conniptions." Sorry, bishop, but the objections came from many of us who are not "on the far-left end of the spectrum," and our concerns deserve an answer, not a dismissive reply like this.

Another woman has accused the president of sexual assault. What would happen to this man if he were a priest? Or a lay employee at a Catholic school? He would be put on administrative leave immediately while an investigation examined the allegations. Maybe we should send someone to the White House to ordain him!

Colbert King, in The Washington Post, argues that many of the Democratic candidates for the presidency need to leave the stage so the important business of

democracy can happen. Arguably, would any of us know who Mayor Pete Buttigieg is if King's objections had been allowed to screen candidates for the debate? No. But, King is on to something. More on this tomorrow when I preview the first debates.

Also in the Post, a report on the Planned Parenthood forum for presidential candidates. I understand that after the Alabama law, there is a strong desire for clarity on this issue, but it is sad to see that no one had the courage to say that many people, indeed most people, are deeply ambivalent about abortion and it is wrong to ignore that fact by pushing legislation sought only by the extremes.

Advertisement

Spreading the faith is like throwing a pebble into the lake: You never know how far the ripples will spread. Last week, I called attention to developments in Puerto Rico where faith leaders on the island have raised their voice in order to defend worker pensions and make sure those pensions are treated more favorably than the claims of investors. But I never thought I would see a mention of their work in, of all places, the Alabama Political Reporter. They say bad news travels fast, but sometimes the Good News does too.

In the Hartford Courant, a look at a case in which female high school athletes have filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, arguing that the participation of transgender athletes in post-season competition constitutes a violation of Title IX, the groundbreaking law that mandated equal funding for women's sports. It is hard not to sympathize with both sides.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled 5-4 that a property rights claim can go directly to the federal courts, where such claims are historically more successful. While most of the focus on the increasingly conservative court looks at the culture-war battles, the really depressing change in the court will have to do with these kinds of business and labor cases. The dismantling of neo-liberalism will have to overcome this bulwark of conservative jurisprudence if it is to succeed. NPR has the story.

Another example of the problem with philanthropy: The anti-vaccine movement, recently endorsed by spiritual guru-turned-presidential-candidate Marianne Williamson, before she had to walk the endorsement back, is not any grassroots movement, but an Astroturf movement funded by a wealthy couple in New York. I

am beginning to think Sen. Elizabeth Warren's wealth tax should be larger than what she is proposed so that rich people can do fewer crazy things with their money.

[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.