Opinion



by Michael Sean Winters

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At Politico, a look at Sen. Elizabeth Warren's unconventional campaign in which she has forsworn the usual campaign consultants. It must be working: Warren continues to rise in the polls, and her second quarter fundraising total — an eye-popping $19 million, all of it from small donors because she has also forsworn high dollar fundraising events — was a whole lot more than most of us were guessing it would be.

On the other hand, Marianne Williamson seems determined to do her best to make sure President Donald Trump wins a second term. At the Hill, a report on her efforts to help hapless Mike Gravel raise enough money to make it on to the debate stage. I do not care how he does it nor what rationale he employs, but it is vital that Democratic National Committee Chair Tom Perez find a way to get all these vanity candidates off the stage.

At Domeocracy, John Lawrence tells the young progressive activists in Congress to grow up and decide whether they wish to be legislators or activists. He approvingly quotes Speaker Nancy Pelosi to the effect that unless you have 218 votes, you are only having a conversation. I do not agree with everything Lawrence has to say, and I think Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez gets kudos for helping introduce big ideas like the Green New Deal. But Lawrence is right that legislating is almost always a study in

incrementalism, and the tendency on the left to demand purity tests of its own is puerile and counter-productive.

At WABE, Atlanta's NPR station, Molly Samuel looks at the U.S. Catholic Church's uneven response to Laudato Si' and the climate crisis more generally. Some good things are happening, but there is a long, long way to go, and the bishops could and should be doing more.

You would think the editors at The New York Times would have a mind to get a theologian to discuss the controversy in Indianapolis over the firing of Catholic school teachers who enter into same-sex marriages. And you would be wrong. Instead, they published a column by Margaret Renkl, who apparently thinks Justice Anthony Kennedy is a part of the magisterium. I exaggerate, but not by much. Renkl calls Archbishop Charles Thompson a hypocrite, which he is not. I happen to disagree with him about this, but on what grounds does she call him a hypocrite? The fact that the teacher's marriage was recognized as a constitutional right has precisely no bearing on whether or not it conforms to Catholic teaching. Really, sometimes The Times embarasses itself and more often than not, it is on a religious matter.

At Working Class Perspectives, Tim Strangleman looks at postwar working conditions versus such conditions today. The money quote:

> In studying the past we chart both what we had and what we have lost. But we also ask critical questions as to why, not so long ago, ordinary working-class people could enjoy conditions at work that gave them dignity, confidence, and hope that their lives were getting better, decade by decade, and that the children's lives would be better still. It poses questions for all of us as workers, as voters, stock holders, and citizens: why is treating workers well seen as a cost on the balance sheet to be controlled rather than the right thing to do?

From La Croix International, the Benedictine Abbey at Fontgombault has welcomed a serial killer who was recently released from prison on parole. In explaining his decision to welcome the man the abbot, Fr. Jean Pateau, said: "Why did you agree to put us in the spotlight of the press, with the many disadvantages that this has for our life of prayer and silence? For what purpose? The answer to these questions, which are quite legitimate, is ultimately very simple: the Gospel."

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

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