Opinion
News



by Michael Sean Winters

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From ABC Channel 7 in Chicago, Cardinal Blase Cupich accompanied Holocaust survivor Fritzie Fritshall on a visit to the Auschwitz concentration camp. The cardinal was in Poland to visit with the families of Polish priests serving in the Chicago Archdiocese, but this visit with a survivor is the exactly perfect response to the appearance of the Rev. Louis Farrakhan at a Chicago parish earlier this year.

A really moving article at The Tablet by Anna Rowlands, associate professor of Catholic social thought and practice at Durham University, recounting her time with Jesuit Refugee Services. The citation to Simone Weil was unfamiliar to me, of hospitality as a proxy for justice during times of war and violence, but it is a brilliant ethical insight.

In the Kansas City Star, Melinda Henneberger recounts her interview with South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg, which left her more than a little underwhelmed. It is clear he has not really thought too deeply about his desire to plant the flag of religion on the Democratic Party's hill. And, after getting stumped by a question about Hosanna-Tabor, you can bet he is kicking himself he never got law school on

his resume.

In Caribbean Business, Rep. Raúl Grijalva (D-Arizona) and Nydia Velázquez (D-New York) rightly call for revisiting the Restructuring Support Agreement that wrote off only 22.5 percent of the debt held by Puerto Rico's public utility, Prepa, when 80% is what is needed. And, they rightly note that most of this debt is not held by mom and pop investors: Hedge funds bought bonds that were well known to be risky in order to secure a higher rate of return. The bet went sour. Now they want socialism for hedge funds.

At the Hill, Peter Thiel, the billionaire libertarian who underwrites a lot of political activism on the right, says Sen. Elizabeth Warren is the most dangerous Democrat in the race for the White House. If libertarians see her as a threat, she is doing something right!

Speaking of Warren, Politico reports that she was the only top tier candidate to show up at the Netroots Nation event in Philadelphia last weekend. These meetings of very, very liberal activists are dicey, but it shows she is willing to face activists whose myopia often overwhelms their sense of propriety. Sound like someone else we know? Myopia (and a heavy dose of narcissism) overwhelming a sense of propriety?

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At La Croix International, Massimo Faggioli looks as "the devout schismatics" who cling to their political ideology more than the bond of unity with the Bishop of Rome. One of many money quotes:

> *But there is a big difference between Catholics who are not ready to follow the radicalism of Francis and those who accuse him of being a heretic. The latter are part of a new phenomenon of opposition.*
>
> *Certainly, the Gospel radicality of Francis' teaching has contributed to its rise. But this phenomenon has even more to do with the kind of Church Francis inherited from his predecessors. The 82-year-old pope has been forced to clean up the ideological distortions of Catholicism that have emerged, more or less, in the last two decades. This has been a long*

process in the making.

Prominent among Pope Francis' critics is Samuel Gregg from the Acton Institute. I read his criticism of the Vatican's accord with China and I knew something smelled fishy. Then I remembered: Back in 2014 he published an article claiming that religious freedom and economic liberty are inseparable. I am sure he could try and square the circle, but these defenders of the free market like to claim that capitalism has lifted millions of people out of poverty, and most of those millions are in China. I guess these freedoms do not really walk arm in arm as we were told again and again during the Obama years when the Catholic right objected to both the contraception mandate and the Affordable Care Act more generally.

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

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