News



by Michael Sean Winters

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At The Washington Post, Michael Gerson on why we can't ignore the president's racism. Once again, the country and its conscience is indebted to Gerson for articulating the president's sins more ably than any other, and for reminding us that not all Republicans or evangelical Christians have gone over to the dark side.

Also in the Post, Paul Thacker and Jon Tennant explain why "peer review" is a process open to widespread abuse and should not be viewed as any kind of gold standard. Their article raises many important questions about the need to reform higher education.

In The Dallas Morning News, the great Peggy Wehmeyer on how abortion coverage is typically slanted, as evidenced by the lack of ideological diversity in most newsrooms. This is an article every Democratic campaign strategist should read.

In The New York Times, Frank Bruni again provokes the question: Why did they take him off the restaurant review beat? His attack on Sens. Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren rehashes the worst of conventional wisdom and serves it up on a platter of nonsense. To repeat: the term "moderate" is usually meaningless and when it has meaning, it is usually misunderstood. If you think "the moderates" on stage with

Sanders and Warren could take on Trump, you were watching a different debate from the one I was watching.

At Politico, Sanders defended Warren after Rep. Liz Cheney criticized the Massachusetts senator for saying it was time for the U.S. to pledge no first use of nuclear weapons. Cheney tweeted, "Which American cities and how many American citizens are you willing to sacrifice with your policy of forcing the US to absorb a nuclear attack before we can strike back?" It's been a long time since I studied nuclear strategy, but wasn't the danger of a first strike that it would take out our own nuclear installations, not our cities? Once the cities are attacked, it is all too late, we would be in Armageddon territory.

Also at Politico, Austin Sarat and Jonathan Obert take a deeper look at gun culture and the attitudes of people who choose to buy guns. It is important for those of us who favor stricter gun control laws to delve into this kind of research. It will take strong political will to achieve gun control, and having some buy-in among gun owners is critical.

At America magazine, Jesuit Fr. Bill McCormack argues that Bishop Robert Barron and Jordan Peterson have something to teach us all about evangelization. McCormack writes:

> *At his best, Bishop Barron is not asking us to universalize what he is doing. Yes, he has strong opinions about evangelization, particularly that it should be oriented toward beauty as a means to the truth. But, just like any other evangelist, fundamentally, he is navigating a particular relationship with prudence, aware of his gifts and limitations. You can disagree with how he does it and with whom he does it, but Bishop Barron is simply giving us one model for evangelization among many. When many of his supporters and critics act as though it were the only model, they take him more seriously than he himself does.*

Excuse me, but Barron is the chair of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis so his ideas are not just one approach among many. And my criticism of his approach is more foundational than McCormack grasps.

[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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