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

August 8, 2019
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

Cardinal Joseph Tobin of Newark, New Jersey, issued a statement on last weekend's gun violence that is almost a perfect episcopal rejoinder to the ridiculous column publishing by his neighbor to the south, Philadelphia Archbishop Charles Chaput. I am hoping some enterprising moral theologians will give us a fuller examination of Chaput's unfortunate remarks.

In the New York Times, John Eligon examines the ideological motivations of some mass murderers, rooted in this conspiracy theory that white people are "being replaced." Unintentionally, the article shows the degree to which another part of the debate about gun violence, the role of mental illness, is complicated.

Generally speaking, I think our society has become too vindictive, and people get fired for all sorts of mistakes for which a lesser punishment should be applied. But the two police officers in Galveston, Texas, who bound a black suspect in rope and marched him down the street while they stayed on their horses? They should be fired.

Speaking of punishment, at Religion News Service, Mark Silk examines the issues involved in Attorney General William Barr's decision to lift the moratorium on the death penalty and how, as a prominent Catholic layman, the church should respond. I do not think Barr should be denied communion, to be sure, but then no one should be denied communion because of their political views and votes.

Advertisement

From the file marked "Help is on the way," Politico has a story about the ground game campaign in Nevada and all the experts and activists they interviewed in that state said Sen. Elizabeth Warren has the best and largest operation. "Warren has built a monster," said one operative, but this is a friendly, good-hearted monster.

In the Washington Post, Daniel Drezner of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy looks at recent polling and economic data and concludes that he disagrees with the betting markets which have increasingly moved in President Donald Trump's favor for reelection. I do not agree with Drezner that Joe Biden is a strong candidate opposite Trump, but the rest of his analysis seems to cohere with my own impressions from talking to people and looking at the data. At the end of the day, if Trump's approval rating consistently can't get north of 43% with the economy going strong, even the slightest slowing of the economy could drop him a few more points.

[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.*