Opinion
News



by Michael Sean Winters

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At La Croix, everyone's favorite ecclesiologist, Massimo Faggioli, explains the genesis and trajectory of a project for interpreting Vatican II that emerged from a conference this summer near Coblenz, Germany. The shift to a global church, so evident at Vatican II, is now, slowly, becoming a theological and institutional reality. My only caveat: Such efforts must beware of scholars who are from the global South but who were trained in the West acting as spokespeople for the faith in their native lands. Sometimes, their writings betray a distinctive Roman, Belgian or even Boston accent.

At Politico, a report on Sen. Elizabeth Warren's speech at a meeting of Native American tribal leaders, during which she apologized for claiming Native American identity, and then clumsily tried to vindicate the claim with a DNA test. I am not sure this fracas will cost her in the primary but you can bet President Donald Trump will use it to undermine her trustworthiness. She needs a succinct, consistent answer when asked about her ancestral claims, something like "I should have second guessed the family lore. I didn't." In 2000, every time George W. Bush was asked about his drinking as a young man, he always replied the same way: "When I was

young and irresponsible, I was young and irresponsible." For months, reporters tried different ways to frame the question, hoping to get a different response, but he always used the exact same words in the exact same order. After a few months, they stopped asking.

At Politico's magazine, Peter Canellos argues that today's Democrats would do well to look at Franklin D. Roosevelt's "rendezvous with destiny" speech, accepting the Democratic nomination for president in 1936. Without using the word "socialism," he explained why his policies, the most socialistic in the nation's history, were pragmatic responses to the nation's ills, not ideologically driven attacks on capitalism. Canellos is right and the Democrats had best pay attention: If they wrap themselves in the socialist label, they will lose.

Speaking of the economy, at the Washington Post, Philip Bump looks at unemployment rates in the key swing states and while Arizona, Florida, Georgia and North Carolina are all doing better than the national average, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota are lagging behind the national average. Hillary Clinton won the first and last of those lagging behind, but Trump's electoral college victory was made in the middle three.

Also at the Post, Democratic Rep. Abigail Spanberger, who captured the Virginia district long held by former House Majority Leader Eric Cantor, explains how she handles attacks from her own party. The key? She gets personal and pragmatic. See FDR notes above.

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At Medscape, the scandal of CEO compensation expands beyond Catholic hospital networks. Doctors get puny raises, prices for patients explode, and the CEOs keep making millions upon millions, even those who operate so-called non-profit hospitals that happen to function like for-profit ones.

At Foreign Affairs, reason No. 3,487 why to view the United Nations as a decidedly mixed blessing: In an effort to protect hospitals from bombing, they are giving GPS coordinates to Russia, and this alerts the Syrian and Russian warplanes to where they can find the rebels, and they bomb them. The road to hell is paved with good intentions. Sometimes, too, that road leads to massacres.

At Working Class Perspectives, Ronaldo Munck looks at the opportunities for labor organizing presented by globalization, and some strategies that can work to beat back the advantages that management gets from a globalized, neo-liberal economic system. Social movement organizing is undoubtedly one of the bright lights in recent years.

[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.