Opinion
News



by Michael Sean Winters

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File this under "great minds think alike": In The Washington Post, E.J. Dionne Jr. offers some of the same cautions against facile attempts to analogize from Labour Party's loss in the U.K. to the situation facing the Democrats.

President Donald Trump seems unable to stop kicking the people of Puerto Rico, who have suffered enough in recent years from disasters both natural and Wall Street-made. Now, after congressional negotiators agreed to send $12 billion in Medicaid funding to the island over four years, the president has intervened to lower that figure to $5.7 billion over five years. Politico has the story. I hope all those Puerto Ricans who live along the I-4 corridor in Florida and around Lancaster, Pennsylvania, take note and make sure they are registered to vote him out of office next year.

At Commonweal, Peter Steinfels criticizes the reporting and commenting on the Pew Study regarding Catholic belief in the Eucharist that was published by my colleagues Heidi Schlumpf, Tom Roberts and Jesuit Fr. Tom Reese. I think Steinfels undervalues the problematic framing in the poll, and in a prior poll in which he helped frame the questions. If you give people a choice between the Eucharist being symbolic and it

being ontologically the body and blood of Christ, the choice is misguided because the Eucharist is both. That said, I am betting that most Catholics who have not been in a church in years, if they walk into one tomorrow, they will genuflect, which is not the kind of thing a person does anywhere else in life.

At Medium, Google fires another worker who was merely exercising her right to organize and who posted a notice that Google was legally bound to post. Union busting is thriving, which is another good reason to vote for a Democrat who is serious about protecting the rights of workers.

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At Foreign Affairs, Aluf Benn looks hopefully to the future of Israeli politics after Bibi Netanyahu. Reading this, I discern more commonalities for our country than in all the articles comparing the U.S. with the U.K.: Netanyahu has changed Israeli democracy in ways that will take a long time to heal, and there is no guarantee that the normal channels of democracy will prove up to the task. The money quote:

> Netanyahu may well manage to muddle through once more, but even if he does not, his constant attempts to govern by dividing and conquering will have changed Israeli politics for the worse. It is somewhat ironic that beyond this record of political division, Netanyahu's legacy is surprisingly thin, marked above all by an aversion to reform and risk in domestic and foreign policy alike.

At Where Peter Is, Daniele Palmer does the deep dive into the schismatic group Tradition, Family and Property. The group garnered attention here in the U.S. for hosting a speaking tour by Alexander Tschugguel, the self-identified vandal who threw Pachamama statues into the Tiber. They fashion themselves as traditionalists. I wonder what they think to themselves when they pray the Magnificat?

Blessings on Margot Sanger-Katz at The New York Times for pointing out what no one wants to say: It is not only the insurance companies that connive for their share of health care spending, but providers also. They recently scuttled a provision that enjoyed bipartisan support to ban the practice of surprise billing, that is, getting a huge bill because the hospital you went to may be in your network, but the doctor in the emergency room isn't. If that got stripped from a must-pass bill, and some

Democrats were involved in removing the provision, you have some idea what we are up against in trying to bring rationality to our nation's health care industry.

At Politico, a report on South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg's failure to disclose some of his largest and most well-connected bundlers when he released the names last week. Incompetent or dishonest? You be the judge. And, at Business Insider, details and photos of a fundraiser for Mayor Pete in Napa Valley, where guests drank $900-a-bottle cabernet, and the candidate spoke underneath a chandelier with 1,500 Swarovski crystals, putting a little glitter into the campaign.

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

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