Opinion
News



by Michael Sean Winters

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At Politico, the mainstream media finally notices that there are a lot of Catholics in Iowa and that making a pitch for them, as former Vice President Joe Biden is doing, might prove more helpful than promising to have your Secretary of Education nominee vetted by a transgender student, as Sen. Elizabeth Warren promised last week.

In The Washington Post, Sarah Pulliam Bailey examines why pro-life Democrats are finding it harder to stay in the party. It is strange that Democrats say that defeating Trump matters more than anything else this year, but they refuse to extend so much as a fig leaf to pro-life Democrats or even to pro-choice Democrats who have moral qualms about late-term abortion.

Relatedly, at USA Today, Kristen Day, executive director of Democrats for Life, discusses her inability to even secure a meeting with presidential campaigns and points out that while Democrats profess they want big money out of politics, they make an exception for the abortion industry. How many elections will we have to lose before the party recognizes most Americans are not pro-choice extremists?

In The Washington Post, E.J. Dionne Jr. is in high dudgeon over the GOP senators' decision not to call any witnesses in the impeachment trail of President Donald Trump. Of course, I agree with Dionne. His best line: "Sure, Democrats can be partisan, but in the art of the double standard, Republicans are Michelangelos." The vote was to be expected, but I still found myself seething as it transpired.

From the Chicago Tribune, the Big Shoulders Fund, a non-profit organization that supports schools, is investing $90 million in the city's Catholic schools. This investment will not only help the schools and students who attend them, it will boost the neighborhoods, too. Longtime readers will recall my review of a book about the social capital Catholic schools provide urban neighborhoods by Margaret F. Brinig and Nicole Stelle Garnett, *Lost Classroom, Lost Community: Catholic Schools' Importance in Urban America*.

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At First Things, George Weigel, for reasons I cannot fathom, fails to grasp that Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI is not just another great theological mind and so his contributions to theological debate will carry a different kind of weight. And I do not remember Weigel being so worried about married clergy when conservative Anglicans came knocking.

In the forum of Catholic Theological Ethics in the World Church, Jesuit Fr. Grégoire Catta explains how last year's meeting of the French bishops' conference welcomed lay faithful to the meeting at Lourdes, and, as he explains, evidenced Pope Francis' encouragement that we "initiate processes" rather than just "possess spaces" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 223).

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

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