Opinion
News



by Michael Sean Winters

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I do not normally link to a tweet, but this one from Ben Tarnoff is so on-the-money it deserves widespread attention. As I argued yesterday, if former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg is the answer, the Democratic Party has forgotten what is the question.

In The Washington Post, Robert Kuttner explains that the problem with Bloomberg's explanation about the cause of the 2008 financial crisis is not only racially offensive, it shows a willingness to buy the Wall Street and GOP talking points about what caused that crisis. Hint: It had more to do with deregulation than with poor African Americans.

Also in The Washington Post, Ruy Teixeira argues that Sen. Bernie Sanders is peddling a bit of a myth when he claims he will inspire people who have never voted before to come to the polls and drive turnout up. Teixeira's look at the 2018 election is instructive: Turnout was up for both parties, but the key was that many people who voted Republican in 2016 switched and voted Democratic in 2018.

In The New Yorker, Benjamin Wallace-Wells looks at the collapse of Sen. Elizabeth Warren's presidential campaign. They overestimated the value of grassroots organizing — a lesson Sanders may not have yet learned — and spent money on digital advertising rather than TV. That might have worked if the first four states in the nominating contest did not each have lots of older, rural voters. He also overlooks the self-inflicted wounds such as Warren suggesting she would have a transgender teenager vet her secretary of education. Really?

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At Commonweal, Massimo Faggioli examines the pope's recent exhortation *Querida Amazonia*, with special attention to how synodality can and should continue to develop as an ecclesiological source of renewal and reform. I think he overstates the significance of Pope Francis' decision not to open the door to married clergy in the region. I am told the issue was not really on the top 10 list of requests from the Amazon participants at the synod. But, as always, Faggioli sees the long term through the lens of Vatican II and its ongoing reception, so his essay is a must-read.

A fascinating TedxTallaght talk by cardiologist James O'Keefe in which he reflects on his son's homosexuality and shares some conclusions that contemporary scientists posit as to how and why homosexuality has perpetuated itself despite the fact that natural selection should have weeded it out in a few generations. "Genetically programmed altruism" is what he argues gay people bring to our world. The LGBT community needs to wonder what will happen when geneticists are able to isolate the genetic coding that disposes someone to homosexuality in utero. Seeing as some abortions are procured because the fetus is a girl, how much do you want to bet that some parents will do the same with the much smaller population of gay fetuses?

How deep is racism in our culture? In The Washington Post, the grim story of an African American swimmer who stops at a rest stop with his teammates, but he is the one who ends up on the ground with a swarm of police around him, one of whom threatens to blow his head off while holding a gun to his head. It is not every day you read an article that leaves you shaking with anger and fear.

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

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