Opinion
News



by Michael Sean Winters

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Tonight's Democratic debate is the last, not only before Saturday's South Carolina primary, but also the last before Super Tuesday. This is the last chance the candidates have to alter the trajectory in the race before the big day. Last week's debate came *after* the completion of early voting in Nevada. And heretofore, national polls have mattered little compared to state polls. But Super Tuesday is a national contest, and just when it looked like the campaign of Sen. Elizabeth Warren had run out of gas, a CBS national poll has her in second place. What is clear, however, is that on the day after Super Tuesday, there can only be one viable alternative to Sen. Bernie Sanders or Sanders will cruise to the nomination.

From Business Insider, the U.S. Soccer Federation says that it is justified in paying women players far less than men in part because they "perform such different jobs." At first, I thought, "Huh?" But, upon reflection, the federation has a point. Our women's team wins tournaments and our men's team loses them, so I guess the jobs are different.

From the irony folder, and CNN, the government of the United Kingdom has unveiled its new post-Brexit British passports and they are a beautiful blue. They are also

manufactured in Poland by a Dutch-Franco company. So Britain is not that far out of the EU after all. Seriously, not all the consequences of the exit will be funny, so we should laugh when we can.

At American Affairs, Oren Cass looks at the standard indices for evaluating living expenses over time and offers a different model that he dubs "the cost of thriving index." He explains why people making the same relative amount of money in the late 1970s as today would in fact enjoy much better prospects than someone making the same amount of money adjusted for inflation. I would encourage no one to share this with Democratic Party operatives. There is no way to turn this analysis into useful talking points, at least not against someone as effective at dominating the public conversation as the incumbent president.

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At Axois, a look at non-profit hospitals and how they fulfill — or don't — their obligation to provide charity care in exchange for their non-profit status. Next up? Making sure that non-profit hospitals are required to have workers on their boards of trustees.

At the New Yorker, Dorothy Wickenden's podcast features a discussion with Rachel Bitecofer, the political scientist who predicted the 2018 midterm election results. As I noted before, I think she overstates the novelty of her theory, but it is worth the consideration of those Democrats who are all in a panic over the prospect of Sanders being the nominee.

From WherePeterIs, Nathan Turowsky looks at the Catholic News Agency's story about bishops trying to trash the reputation of Jesuit Fr. Jim Martin and putting words in the pope's mouth to achieve that end. Anonymously. I will comment on this later in the week.

[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.*