Opinion
News



by Michael Sean Winters

View Author Profile

Follow on Twitter at @michaelswinters

## Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

March 10, 2020
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

The coronavirus continues to create havoc in the markets. On Monday, trading was actually halted to stop the slide after the Dow Jones Industrial Average lost 1,800 points. President Donald Trump's reelection is being decided before our eyes. There is nothing abstract about this economic downturn. Your average businessperson might have had trouble relating to the impeachment saga, having never been in a position to coerce a foreign government, finding it hard to know who is telling the truth, beset by unpronounceable names. But, when she is reconciling her end-on-quarter statements and budgeting for the next quarter, when the sneezing person across the aisle at the supermarket causes dread, when the kids are sent home from school, none of that is abstract.

From the Daily Beast, the Anti-Defamation League takes issue with EWTN's Raymond Arroyo, who was filling in for Laura Ingraham on Fox News, when he alleged billionaire and former mayor Michael Bloomberg would be "pulling the strings" on a Joe Biden presidency, trafficking in classic anti-Semitic tropes about wealthy Jews secretly exercising power. In a letter to Fox News CEO Suzanne Scott, Anti-Defamation League CEO Jonathan Greenblatt wrote: "This charge, and the

comments that followed about Bloomberg's wealth and power, play into deep seated anti-Semitic canards about Jewish power and money. The use of the term 'puppet master' specifically conjures up longstanding anti-Semitic tropes about Jewish power and the notion of the Jewish puppeteer has figured in anti-Semitic imagery throughout modern history."

From Yahoo News, Hillary Clinton announces that Sen. Bernie Sanders isn't "the strongest nominee." We should all pause here. Clinton is an expert on what constitutes a weak nominee. She also said Biden is essentially assembling the same coalition she did four years ago. Does she think this kind of comment helps Biden? I have a suggestion to both Clintons: Go away.

At Politico, Alex Thompson offers a different take on the failure of Sen. Elizabeth Warren's presidential campaign, based on interviews with anonymous senior staff. I would tell them all: physician heal thyself! The senior staff failed Warren at critical times — in debate prep, on health care policy formation and messaging, on stopping the drift into politically correct, "woke" nonsense — and have no one to blame but themselves. Remember her interfaith advisory council? Fourteen liberal Protestants, a Reform rabbi and a sensei. No Catholics. Just because Dubuque County, Iowa, is almost 60% Catholic and not following a sensei, why would you need a Catholic? This is what happens when key staffers are drawn from the abortion rights lobby.

Shame on Sen. Chuck Schumer for remarks made outside the court as the justices prepared to hear a case about abortion. Chief Justice John Roberts was right and Schumer subsequently apologized for his comments. What does it say about a "moderate" like Schumer that abortion is the issue on which he decides to be an extremist?

I want to make sure everyone saw this article, posted here at NCR, about Faith in Public Life's John Gehring going to Xavier University to discuss race. This is an effort to applaud, although I hope Gehring will not confine the conversation to college campuses, where ideas about race and much else can be askew. There are other socio-cultural arenas for discussing race which, more than any other issue, has been on a roller coaster ride the past decade or so, from the high point of Barack Obama's election in 2008 to the low point of Trump's election in 2016.

Advertisement

As historians begin pouring over the archives of Pope Pius XII, here is a 2010 oldie-but-goodie by David Gibson in the New York Times, when Pope Benedict XVI pronounced his wartime predecessor as possessing "heroic virtue," a necessary step on the route to sainthood. The quote from Pius' priest secretary — "No, No. Pius XII is not a saint! He is a great man of the church." — captures something that was overlooked by the people shouting "Santo subito!" in St. Peter's Square at John Paul II's funeral. Sainthood and papacy might require a different skill set.

At The First, the online journal of Catholic Theological Ethics in the World Church, Indian theologian Geevarghese Kaithavana invokes the concept of nonviolence, *ahisma*, so central to the teachings of Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism, as well as Catholic theology, to frame proposals in that current to amend its abortion laws.

At the Catholic Thing, Fr. Gerald Murray unintentionally explains why so many people are leaving the Catholic Church. Murray attacks Jesuit Fr. Jim Martin for trying to help young LGBT kids recognize their God-given value and worth, displays a coarse understanding of human sexuality and fails to recognize the fact that the church's teaching on homosexuality is self-evidently in need of development. Murray is a regular on EWTN's "The World Over" with Arroyo and he displays his heartlessness there as well. Why has New York Cardinal Timothy Dolan not reeled him in?

[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.*