Opinion
News



by Michael Sean Winters

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Archbishop José Gomez: Call your office! At The Bias, Jefferson Hodge highlights the anti-union policies of some Catholic hospitals, despite the fact that the U.S. bishops' conference's documents — "Respecting the Just Rights of Workers: Guidance and Options for Catholic Health Care and Unions" and "Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services" — both affirm the right to organize in the clearest terms. All hell breaks lose if a Catholic hospital deviates an iota from the "Ethical and Religious Directives" on a matter of pelvic theology, but on unequivocal social teaching? Not so much.

Glad to see The Washington Post throwing some shade at The New York Times on account of the latter's ridiculous article about then-Mayor Bernie Sanders reaching out to the Soviet city of Yaroslavl in the late 1980s to become "sister cities." The Times suggested there was something untoward about the effort but The Post's Katrina vanden Heuvel delivers a history lesson to the Times, explaining that many cities were doing the same thing at that time, with the blessing of the Reagan administration. She rightly notes there is a word for such articles: propaganda.

As I was NOT saying: At The Washington Post, Greg Sargent interviews a Republican mayor in Macomb County, Michigan, one of the pivot counties that voted for Obama twice and then for Trump. The mayor is voting for Joe Biden this year because he is dissatisfied with Trump. I hope there are millions more like him.

At Politico, John Huntington argues that John F. Kennedy's speech to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association laid the groundwork for the rise of the Christian right. This is bunk. Kennedy's strict commitment to church-state separation was not what alarmed conservative evangelicals so much as Supreme Court decisions and then desegregation. Baptists approved of strict separation, especially where Catholics were concerned, and it was only a combination of factors 10 years after JFK's assassination that provoked them into politics.

At the blog Where Peter Is, another installment of their "Which Pope Said This?" contains some words of wisdom about temptation and the devil. They are doing a great job over there confronting anti-Francis folk with conservative arguments, like this one about conscience from David Wanat.

Tomorrow will be the seventh anniversary of the election of Pope Francis. Normally, I would dedicate a post to the occasion but the domestic political scene is so fast moving that tomorrow I will attend to that. So, by way of marking the date, and due to the happy coincidence that my local PBS station re-broadcast the performance of "Jesus Christ Superstar" done two years ago as part of their Great Performances series this past weekend, I suggest that the core of Francis' message that keeps getting lost is well expressed in the song "Poor Jerusalem." It is the second half of the song, (after Simon Zealotes and the ensemble sing the first half) performed here by John Legend.

Do we really understand what power and glory are unless we see them through the shadow of the cross? In response to the sex abuse crisis we have had a lot of talk about management theory and a lot of cultural criticism, but where is the theology, the "faith seeking understanding"? In any event, happy anniversary, Holy Father.

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

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