Opinion
News



by Michael Sean Winters

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Here is a beautiful 14th century antiphon, reportedly given to a group of Dominican nuns by St. Bartholomew the Apostle who knocked at their door during a plague in 1317.

Here is the English translation:

> Star of Heaven,
>
> who nourished the Lord
>
> and rooted up the plague of death
>
> which our first parents planted:
>
> May that star now deign
>
> to hold in check the constellations

whose strife causes in people

the sores of a terrible death.

O glorious star of the sea,

save us from infection.

Hear us: for your Son,

who honors you, denies you nothing.

Jesus, save us, for whom

the Virgin Mother prays to you.

The ideological purposes to which the coronavirus is being put shows a kind of human ingenuity combined with depravity that is as scary as the virus itself. On Twitter, check out this thread. It begins with an observation I found unimpeachable: "Libertarians: please entertain us with an implausible story about how market forces, private industry, and rational individual choices would harmoniously coalesce to substantively address the COVID-19 pandemic." Sadly, some made the effort. Check out the article from Mises Institute in which the author extols the South Korean health care system but seems to skip over the fact that South Korea has a single payer system. More on this tomorrow.

Boston may be the only place in America where St. Patrick's Day is a public holiday and Holy Cross Cathedral is normally filled to capacity for the Mass at noon. This year, the Mass will be televised but there will be no congregation in attendance. Boston Cardinal Sean O'Malley had prepared a statement for the day, however, long before anyone knew the Mass would be cancelled. His statement on the legacy of slavery at St. Patrick's Day Mass in Boston is courageous.* Growing up, I remember the ugly scenes when busing was employed to desegregate the public schools.

The Trump administration's response to the virus is entirely in bounds and David Leonhardt at The New York Times has done us a favor in collating the many times President Donald Trump attempted to minimize the threat the virus posed when timely warnings might have stopped it in its tracks. Mike Bloomberg: call your ad

team. A series of ads featuring no talk-over, no rebuttal, only Trump in his own words speaking irresponsibly about this would make his failure indelible.

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At The American Prospect, Robert Kuttner provides a "do not reappoint" list of Wall Street Democrats who saddled the last two Democratic administrations with corporate friendly economic policies which, in turn, paved the way for the rise of Trump. You will recognize many of the names on the list, but Kuttner has done us all a service by collating them in one place.

What would we do without FiveThirtyEight? They just put up a quiz in which you can guess what percentage of the American electorate supported policies were advocated by Sen. Bernie Sanders. Of course, the people who need to be looking at this are on Team Biden because the most popular policy on the list was a wealth tax, something Biden has failed to endorse but which is supported by two-thirds of the American people.

At the New York Post, Jon Levine proves that not all "Bernie Bros" are alike: the three he looks at started as advocates for the candidacy of former Alaska Gov. Mike Gravel. 'Nuff said. But the media has to be responsible here, also. Most of Sanders' supporters are prepared to vote for any Democratic nominee in November. The worry is that Biden will start listening to Wall Street and young people will get turned off and stay home. Another worry is that Biden's team will be condescending to Sanders' younger supporters, which is not a good recipe for bringing them on board.

[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.*

**This story has been updated to clarify that Boston Cardinal Sean O'Malley's St. Patrick's Day message is a statement, not a homily.*