Opinion
News



by Michael Sean Winters

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Archbishop Daniel Pilarczyk, the former archbishop of Cincinnati and president of the U.S. bishops' conference has died. He was one of the last real scholars on the bench, a man of prodigious learning and quick wit. One day, driving near Catholic University of America on a blazingly hot Washington summer day, I saw him making his way to the metro, suitcase in tow. I stopped, rolled down the window, asked if he needed a ride, which he did, and drove him to the Washington Theological Union. On the drive, we mostly discussed our mutual friend, Msgr. John Tracy Ellis, who had gone to God. They are now renewing their friendship in heaven and I am sure the conversation is lively and brilliant.

When the going gets tough, people revert to form or they grow, but mostly they revert to form. Maggie Haberman and David E. Sanger at The New York Times report on the libertarian, pro-business instincts of some White House advisers, morphing into full-blown Malthusian ugliness, all from "the most pro-life president in history." This is going to get very ugly, but I think the president could easily overstep. We all need to practice social distancing, but if President Donald Trump thinks he can distance himself politically from Anthony Fauci, he is misreading the national mood.

Italian mayors are not putting up with people who casually ignore public health instructions. This compilation should be watched to the very end: "You are not Will Smith in 'I Am Legend.' " Like so much in life, it is better in Italian.

I wish Fox News' Sean Hannity would meet an Italian mayor in the street. While all prime-time Fox News hosts are cringeworthy, Hannity is the closest thing to an adult cheerleader imaginable: give him a pair of pompoms and the image would be complete. Thanks to The Washington Post for looking at the degree to which he followed the abrupt turn of his master Trump, denying he ever called the virus a hoax a mere nine days after he called it a hoax.

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It appears I was not the only one whose women friends took it very hard when Sen. Elizabeth Warren dropped out of the race, even those women who were not supporting her. At The Guardian, Kenya Evelyn files a report focusing on how young women reacted to Warren's departure from the race. This confirms my sense that Joe Biden could do worse than putting Warren on the ticket with him: As her departure was the vehicle for this deep sense of disappointment, her return would uniquely excite women of all ages, and quite a few guys I know also.

Speaking of Warren, Kevin Robillard at HuffPost looks at the various ways she is still the "ideas factory" for the Democratic Party and, now, the watchdog for all but the wealthiest Americans when it comes to fashioning a stimulus that will help people who need it without enriching those who don't.

At Politico, a look at how changing economic and environmental challenges are turning a part of the country that was once a Democratic stronghold, the rural mining region of Minnesota, into Trump country. This is what the Democrats need to acknowledge: not that they are wrong to prioritize environmental concerns, but that they cannot leave tens of thousands of people and their communities behind.

In The New York Times, David Leonhardt judiciously places significant blame for the crisis we are in squarely at the president's feet and does so with sound argumentation and a great historical analogy. Leonhardt is one of the journalists who are really rising to the occasion, a kind of anti-Hannity. Bravo.

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

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