Opinion
News



by Michael Sean Winters

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Another item for the "Is the Reichstag on fire yet?" file: At FiveThirtyEight.com, Meredith Conroy looks at the role of the media in furthering disinformation campaigns from the White House. It did not start with President Donald Trump, to be sure, but he has taken media manipulation to a new art form. But, of course, it isn't new, it just isn't art. It is propaganda.

In Politico, a look at the scapegoats being crafted by Trump's core supporters. It should surprise no one that Dr. Anthony Fauci is at the top of the list. This is where Joe Biden's campaign needs to bait the president: Fauci may be the most popular American alive, so if you push Trump to comment about him, the president has the choice of alienating his base of the center of the electorate.

From John Cassidy at The New Yorker, why Biden should select Sen. Elizabeth Warren as his running mate. Every day the current administration displays its incompetence only strengthens the case for choosing the person who largely set the policy debate for this election. And, if you win, whom would you rather have helping rebuild our economy in a more just manner?

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For much of the past few weeks, friends have called and wondered what it would take to draft New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo as the Democratic nominee. Needless to say, these calls all came from people who do not live in New York itself where the governor's many liabilities are well known and known to be as large as his obvious gifts. At Politico, Dana Rubinstein looks at how the governor's limitless hatred for New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio is continuing despite the larger issues facing the city and the state, and threatens to tarnish Cuomo's newly won reputation as a no-nonsense leader.

In The New York Times, a look at how the virus has brought to light facts about the U.S workforce. For example, one third of all "essential" jobs are held by women. If the starting point for recovery measures during the 2008 economic meltdown was the idea that Wall Street was essential, this time we realize that the truly essential people are the farmers and the grocery clerks and the nurses. Though not deemed "essential," I suspect most parents have a renewed sense of how essential teachers are. If only society's rewards could follow these designations of what is essential! Cf. Luke 1:52.

I wonder sometimes if the cluelessness of the French nobility circa 1788, so deftly drawn by Charles Dickens in the opening chapters of *A Tale of Two Cities*, was unique to that era, or if today's nobility is more sensitive to appearances. Then I come across a news story like this in The Washington Post about a clinic in St. Tropez where billionaires, whose yachts dock in the port, can come and get tested for the coronavirus. For those who do not know, you can find pitchforks at Lowe's, Home Depot and Tractor Supply.

Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, is 94 years old today and, due to the virus, there will be no gun salute. At the time of her Diamond Jubilee, George Weigel penned a smarmy tribute to this Hanoverian usurper, the head of a family known primarily for intellectual dullness and extreme wealth as well as for devotion to duty, this last which seems to strike every third member of the family. If I were given a palace, let alone six, I think I could muster some devotion to duty too! I shall mark the day with a different kind of tribute. I shall rewatch this sketch by Carol Burnett, Vicki Lawrence, Harvey Korman and Tim Conway:

[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.