Opinion
News



by Michael Sean Winters

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In case some of you were overly depressed by my column yesterday pointing to the enormous digital gap between the two campaigns, at CNN, Harry Enten analyzes the latest polling that shows former Vice President Joe Biden with a significant lead in most state polls. The worry is that the people a good digital campaign are identifying have never voted before and, consequently, are not showing up in traditional polls.

In The Atlantic, Edward-Isaac Dovere argues that Biden may yet choose Sen. Elizabeth Warren as his running mate, a selection that would do more to unite the party than any other available option. What is more, in the face of the crushing economic consequences of the coronavirus, Biden will need someone who can help rebuild the economy and has the policy chops to do it right. But Chris Cillizza at CNN thinks Sens. Kamala Harris and Amy Klobuchar are the leading candidates.

The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns has begun to publish issue briefs for the 2020 election, in which they assess global concerns from the perspective of Catholic social doctrine. What is especially unique is their explicit use of the see-judge-act approach to pastoral and theological analysis that Pope Francis has also employed.

At The Washington Post, Dan Balz on the "hollowing out" of our federal bureaucracy over the years, long before Donald Trump became president but compounded by the president's conspiratorial hostility to "the deep state." This is the kind of issue that should be at the center of this year's election, but it is dry as toast and so it won't be.

Also at The Washington Post, Micki McElya, a history professor at the University of Connecticut, has an extraordinarily well-done essay on the lack of national mourning for the victims of the pandemic. The valuation of the individual lives lost, alas, would conflict with the president's agenda of reopening the economy no matter the cost in human life.

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At The Hill, Sen. Lindsay Graham fabricates a rationale for why he would move to confirm any nominee to the U.S. Supreme Court if a vacancy came up this year, even though Senate Republicans refused to fill such a vacancy four years ago when President Barack Obama nominated Judge Merrick Garland to the high court. Then, the mantra was, "Let the people decide," but now Graham thinks the essential difference is the Senate and White House are in the hands of the same party. I do not recall hearing that stipulation four years ago.

For all those people who send me nasty emails when I point out that Israel, alone among the nations of the Mideast, has that truly indispensable attribute of a democracy — an independent judiciary — an Israeli court found an Israeli extremist guilty on three counts of murder and two counts of attempted murder when he firebombed a Palestinian home on the West Bank. If an Arab fire bombed an Israeli home, would he be found guilty in an Egyptian or Iraqi or Syrian court?

Need something hopeful to help get you through this isolation? Here is a short video of the Monserrate Beach in Luquillo, Puerto Rico. Rising over the beach is El Yunque, the mountain in the rainforest a short drive from the beach. You can see the coral reefs that cause the waves to crash, making for impossibly smooth water close to the beach. Just beyond the camera are the *kioskos*, small food stands and cafés, where you can find some of the most authentic Puerto Rican food on the island. Whenever we went to Luquillo while I was growing up, my mother would say, "This is as close to heaven as I am ever going to get." I suspect she was wrong about that,

and has now reached heaven, but this short video shows why she thought it.

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

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