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Sen. Kamala Harris, left, in an interview with Meghan McCain on "The View" June 8 (NCR screenshot)



by Michael Sean Winters

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Los Angeles Auxiliary Bishop Robert Barron is now hawking a Bible. He is much enamored of the smell of the book, the beauty of the cover, the font of the print. The biblical text is surrounded by his own commentary, as well as that of historic theologians. It is not clear if these volumes contain the whole of the sacred Scriptures or if it is like Thomas Jefferson's version, highlighting some parts and excising others. At $99 a volume, what a deal? The whole video of him is a kind of highbrow hucksterism of the kind we associate with evangelical pastors, not a Roman Catholic bishop.

The other night, a friend called during the 10 p.m. hour, so I muted the television. Laura Ingraham was on. I would occasionally look up, and it was interesting that even without the sound, you could tell that whatever she was saying, it was hateful. I taped it and, watching it the next day, I was right: hateful from start to finish. When EWTN's Raymond Arroyo comes on, you know the show is going to take a turn into the juvenile, but I had not anticipated this: Arroyo dismissed Andrew Jackson's murderous persecution of Native Americans known as the Trail of Tears saying "It was ugly, but those were the times." I resist efforts to place anachronistic readings on history, but the Trail of Tears was barbaric in any age. And Arroyo and Ingraham are an embarrassment in any age, with the volume turned up or turned off.

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Democrats need to stop talking about tuition-free college, or any other measure to aid higher education, until those schools that have increased the amount of "merit aid" dispensed — that is aid not based on financial need — explain what value this has to society. A report by Stephen Burd at New America details the way universities have spent more than $32 billion in financial assistance to students who do not need it. Mom and Dad want a jacuzzi or a new Lexus, and so their kids get dragged into a bidding war. This is obscene. And we wonder why we have such gross income and wealth inequalities in our society.

From CNN, taxpayers paid more than I make in a year for Secret Service protection for Donald Trump Jr. while he went hunting for giant sheep in Mongolia. Surely, a law should be passed that people of enormous wealth who happen to be related to the president should pay for their own Secret Service protection. Team Biden: This is the kind of petty corruption that angers everybody!

The best, succinct explanation of systemic racism as it pertains to law enforcement comes from Ruth Marcus at The Washington Post. The numbers are staggering. And I like her simple definition of the phenomenon: "We have systems and institutions that produce racially disparate outcomes, regardless of the intentions of the people who work within them."

The best explanation of the "defund the police" proposals comes from Sen. Kamala Harris who was asked about it by Meghan McCain on "The View." I still wish proponents of these common sense proposals would change the slogan to something other than "defund," which is not the central point of the proposal. The left needs to learn how to stop snatching political defeat from the jaws of victory. Badly naming a common sense proposal in a way that plays into the hands of the ranters at Fox News is how you lose elections, not how you achieve the reforms of public safety issues that we all seek.

Need a laugh? At Gold Derby, a look at Leslie Jordan's shot at an Emmy award for his magnificent portrayal of Beverley Leslie in "Will and Grace." They include a clip that I had not seen and which is just fabulous. As a bonus, you get to see Sean Hayes as Ethel Mertz, which is splendid as well.

From CBS-Channel 13 in Baltimore, a look at Catholic school closures. The pandemic has claimed some 100 schools already, and that number could double. Included in the list is the Institute of Notre Dame in Baltimore, which opened in 1847 and includes among its alumna Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi. Many of these schools serve low-income neighborhoods and not only provide a ticket into the middle class but also provide social capital to the whole neighborhood.

Here is a piece of music sadly but exquisitely suited to the moment in which we are living: The Sphinx Symphony Orchestra, with the University of Michigan's Men's Glee Club, under the direction of Eugene Rogers, performs the premiere of Joel Thompson's "The Seven Last Words of the Unarmed." It is astonishingly powerful, at the same time textured but spare.

Video on Sphinx Organization's YouTube channel of "The Seven Last Words of the Unarmed," February 2017

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

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