Opinion
News



People in Miami wait for a health assessment check-in on the coronavirus before entering Jackson Memorial Hospital June 18. (CNS/Reuters/Marco Bello)



by Michael Sean Winters

View Author Profile

Follow on Twitter at @michaelswinters

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

June 23, 2020

Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

Mark the calendar for July 4. It will be the anniversary of our nation's founding, and will also mark two weeks since the ordination of new priests at the Cathedral Basilica of Sts. Peter and Paul in Philadelphia. There was some effort to maintain social distancing among the faithful in the pews, but the clergy were crammed together, with no masks, into the choir stalls of the sanctuary. We will know within two weeks if this event was lethal, but we already know it was exceedingly reckless.

At The Tablet, Robert Christian examines the political fallout from President Donald Trump's tweet about the letter he received from disgraced former nuncio Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò. "There simply is no road to victory if his support among white Catholics in key swing states drops significantly. Trump, whose political instincts should not be underestimated, is betting that these swing voters will buy into the 'deep state' theory and be impressed by Viganò's support. This is a real gamble," Christian writes. "For it to succeed, it will depend on cynics at places like EWTN and Fox News, which reach many middle-of-the-road voters as well as ultra-conservatives, to treat Viganò's conspiracy theories as credible." Bingo. The problem is not the fringe. The problem is mainstreaming the fringe.

Advertisement

At The Kansas City Star, Melinda Henneberger has a few questions for Sheriff Kevin Bond of Pettis County, Missouri, who in an open letter to his fellow county residents defended his deputy killing an unarmed black woman. Needless to say, the sheriff comes out on the losing end of an intellectual and moral struggle with Henneberger, who is one of journalism's most radiant lights.

In The Washington Post, a look at how coronavirus cases are beginning to surge in many states. Arizona has seen new cases rise 49%. Florida has seen cases rise by 30%. In Texas, the increase is 29%. This is horrifying. Yet there is almost no discussion of shutting down the economy again. It is vital that those who, like me, are angry with Trump for his failure to profitably use the time when the economy was on lockdown to prepare the nation for a reopening, also recognize how

desperately some people need the economy to restart. The issue is not whether to reopen but how to do it responsibly. Trump's failure may cost tens of thousands of lives, mostly among the elderly, and I hope those who do not get infected remember his recklessness in November.

Pope Francis used the phrase integral human ecology in "*Laudato Si', On Care for Our Common Home*" and now The New York Times has an article that gives a perfect example of what he means: Climate change increases the risk of adverse impacts on unborn children, and those risks are especially large for Black mothers and their unborn children.

Also in the Times, Lauren Kelley on the forthcoming Supreme Court decision in the abortion case *June Medical Services* v. *Russo*. Kelley provides a list of anti-abortion legislation that has been introduced in different states, and then observes: "It's been an absolute onslaught, and one that's gotten more extreme over the years." A pro-life activist could have provided a similar list of pro-choice legislation and reached the same conclusion. In short, there is no going back to the pre-*Roe* situation in which legislatures were moving towards some kind of compromise. The issue is now defined exclusively by extremists on both sides and, just so, will continue to tear at the fabric of our democracy while it does nothing to help women facing crisis pregnancies or their unborn children.

[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.*