Opinion
News



by Michael Sean Winters

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From our friends at Jubilee USA Network, a group of interfaith leaders in Puerto Rico have asked Congress to make sure some provision for the island is made in the next stimulus bill. Sixty percent of the island's children live in poverty, the aftershocks from an earthquake late last year continue on an almost daily basis, and the island's economy never recovered from changes in tax laws in the mid-2000s that drove pharmaceutical manufacturing off the island. Jubilee USA distinguishes itself by its ability to work across the aisle, and their efforts on behalf of Puerto Rico have been heroic.

In The Washington Post, Christopher Ingraham looks at a new study that demonstrates one more benefit of strong unions: Politicians are almost always more responsive to the concerns of wealthy constituents, but in political districts where union members make up a significant share of the population, politicians are far more responsive to the needs of working and middle class voters. It seems self-evident when you think about it, but take a step back and ask yourself why income inequality was not as grotesque in the middle of the 20th century as it is today, and consider the strength of unions back then, and the need to help rebuild the labor movement is job No. 1 for progressives.

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In The New York Times, Paul Krugman explains the Trump administration's failed response to the coronavirus, as well as that of key Trump allies like Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis. He notes the obvious need to have grounded the economic reopening of the country on sound public health measures, and explains why Republican leaders did not:

> So what was going on? Were our leaders just stupid? Well, maybe. But there's a deeper explanation of the profoundly self-destructive behavior of Trump and his allies: They were all members of America's cult of selfishness.

Here is where the bishops need to focus. Forget about contraception mandates. Stop whining about secularism. Until we reconstitute a culture in which the common good has some power to govern behavior, preaching the Gospel is like sowing seed among weeds. And such weeds.

At Politico, Joshua Zeitz looks at the long-term consequences of Congressman John Lewis' decision to engage the political establishment and enter into it:

> One might well ask if electoral politics tamed the radicalism of movement leaders like Lewis. But the more important question is how those leaders transformed partisan politics and gave birth to a new Democratic Party positioned for long-term success in a diverse 21st-century America.

It takes all kinds, but those with the patience and perseverance to actually enter into electoral politics and try and change structures from within tend to accomplish things the rest of us can only yack about. This, along with his moral integrity, was what made Lewis a great, great political and cultural leader.

The incomparable Stephen Colbert tackles President Donald Trump's concern that mail-in ballots have been sent to dogs!

I tend to agree with Karen Tumulty more than not, but this op-ed in The Washington Post totally misunderstood the issue raised by former Sen. Chris Dodd's vetting of

Sen. Kamala Harris as a potential running mate. The issue is not one of gender but of generation: Dodd was objecting to the cavalier and utilitarian manner in which she had dismissed a previous attack on Biden. Dodd, whom I have known since I was 10, revered and emulated his father who was a prosecutor at Nuremberg. He knew that politics was about more than winning.

Lastly, from Scotland, Daisy the St. Bernard had had enough, laid down and would not be moved. She had to be rescued by some kind humans, turning the tables on her breed's historic role as rescuers. We have all had days like Daisy's and it is always nice when kind humans help us down the mountain.

[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.*