Opinion
News



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

August 13, 2020
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

In the New York Times, Matt Flegenheimer and Lisa Lerer have a profile of Sen. Kamala Harris that makes me like her more than I did before reading it. The article also makes me wish I had included a point in my discontented column yesterday, namely, people change and grow and develop. The Bobby Kennedy who ran for president in 1968 was far different from the Bobby Kennedy who managed his brother's campaign in 1960. Let's hope the experience of suffering on the streets of so many towns and cities will help Harris become more disposed to the kind of progressive economic solutions the country needs now more than ever. Still, it was disconcerting that the only people calling Harris a progressive on Tuesday night's cable shows were Donald Trump surrogates.

Of course, whenever you despair that the Democrats are too beholden to neoliberal economic ideas, the Republicans step up and remind you that their party is verifiably off the rails. Politico reports on the GOP primary victory of Marjorie Taylor Greene in Georgia's 14th Congressional District. Greene holds explicitly racist views and believes in the QAnon conspiracy theory. The next time a Republican tells you that Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is extreme…..

The Washington Post has embarked on a really valuable series that breaks down some of the most important swing states, analyzing different regions and how they have shifted in the Trump era. First up is Michigan, where Trump's victory was the first by a Republican since George H.W. Bush beat Michael Dukakis in 1988 but where Democrats swept all statewide races in 2018. An interesting bit of trivia? Port Huron, where the Students for a Democratic Society crafted their 1962 manifesto, stayed blue in 2016 while the area around it went heavily for Trump.

Also at the Post, a profile of Dr. Peter Marks, the career official at the Food and Drug Administration who will be tasked with overseeing approval of potential vaccines for the coronavirus. He sounds unflappable. I wonder if Trump will try and sack him?

Advertisement

Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot did the country — and especially the Democrats — a favor in taking such a strong stand against those who looted stores in her city. "We intend to hold you accountable for your actions," she said of those who went on a rampage. It is much easier to defend peaceful protesters from the federal provocations we saw in Portland, Oregon, if one has first taken a tough stance against looting and violence. The only way I think Trump can manage to get reelected is if our nation's cities descend into chaos in the weeks ahead. He will try. Lightfoot has provided the model response for Democrats.

At Religion News Service, Melissa Rogers, who headed the faith-based office at the White House during Obama's second term, offers an insider's view of the ways Joe Biden's faith affects his work, rebutting the president's crass, and ridiculous, attacks on this score. The money quote:

> Crucially, Biden knows that it's not the job of U.S. government officials, especially the president, to tell Americans who is and is not godly, to inform religious communities who is the best political candidate for them, or to tell Americans they should cast their ballot based on a person's religious affiliation or lack thereof. And Biden knows that the bully pulpit is no place for fear-mongering on factors like faith, race or ethnicity.

I will have more on this issue of Biden's faith tomorrow.

[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.*