Opinion
News
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Judge Amy Coney Barrett of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit, President Donald Trump's nominee for the U.S. Supreme Court, speaks during the second day of her confirmation hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee on Capitol Hill in Washington Oct. 13. (CNS/Reuters/Erin Schaff)



by Michael Sean Winters

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Judge Amy Coney Barrett of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit, President Donald Trump's nominee for the U.S. Supreme Court, speaks during the second day of her confirmation hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee on Capitol Hill in Washington Oct. 13. (CNS/Reuters/Erin Schaff)

Looking for a good reason to vote against the nomination of Judge Amy Coney Barrett? How's this: It is pretty clear she just lied under oath. How else to explain her response to a pretty straightforward question? Sen. Kamala Harris asked: "Prior to your nomination, were you aware of President Trump's statement committing to nominate judges who will strike down the Affordable Care Act? And I'd appreciate a

yes or no answer." Barrett said she did not recall. Nixon said he was not a crook. The Guardian has the narrative.

At the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's Religion & Ethics website, Villanova's Massimo Faggioli on how the controversy surrounding Barrett's nomination reflects deep changes in public Catholicism and how the version of conservative, politicized Catholicism she epitomizes is problematic for religion, not just for politics. Faggioli is that rare foreign visitor who sees things it is sometimes hard for us natives to see, and here he is spot-on in his analysis. The money quote:

> The ties between Catholic elites and the Republican Party and its operatives are longer and deeper than between the Catholic Church and European Christian-Democratic parties in the twentieth century, at a time when the hierarchical Church was concerned with respecting the boundaries between the religious and the secular, mindful of what had happened in the first half of the twentieth century in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany.

Disentangling those ties is the principal task for the next general secretary of the U.S. bishops conference and it should be happening at chanceries nationwide. It is time for the bishops to resist the politicization of the church, not be complicit in it.

In The Washington Post, a look at how both campaigns are appealing to Catholic voters. Not to put too fine a point on it, but if you want to know how out-of-touch much of the political class is, think about the fact that religious identification is raised in precious few polls and we still do not have any real hard data on how Latino Catholics are voting vis-à-vis evangelical Latinos. I am glad that the Biden team seems to understand the significance of religion and at least The Post recognized the need to cover this angle on the election. NCR readers are way, way ahead of the curve.

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In The New York Times Thomas Edsall offers a caution to those Democrats who are counting their chickens: There are some pieces of information that do not fit the narrative that Trump's support is collapsing, most especially registration numbers in key swing states where Republicans are swamping Democrats among newly

registered voters. Strategists are also worried that many mail-in ballots will not be properly filled out and will be rejected by election officials. I am not sure why the Biden campaign is not spending money on ads that warn people about any particular difficulties in filling out a ballot properly. Most of the polling shows the president's campaign in deep trouble, but no one should think this is a done deal.

We all were horrified by LaCrosse, Wisconsin's, Fr. James Altman's deranged rant that no Catholic can be a Democrat. Here is the antidote: Fr. Lou Cameli, of the Chicago Archdiocese, looks at how Catholics, and others, should approach the upcoming election. Wise, faithful, kind and incisive, Cameli's comments make me sad: If the U.S. bishops conference had avoided the culture wars, which produced the kind of craziness Altman spews, and instead embraced the sanity of Cameli the past 20 years, would so many millions of Catholics be heading for the exits?

Also from Chicago, on Channel 5/NBC, a report on a service of remembrance for those who died from COVID-19, in which union members and religious leaders gathered around a makeshift *ofrenda* altar, similar to those erected for the Día de los Muertos in Mexican culture. This year, All Souls Day is election eve, which is somehow both fitting and heartbreaking. It did not have to be this way.

It is one thing to disagree with fellow Catholics in the media. But, the editor at the Catholic News Agency, J.D. Flynn, has done something so egregious, I do not know where to start. His hit job on Cardinal Kevin Farrell, trying to implicate him in the yet-unpublished McCarrick report, passes off speculation and innuendo as "analysis," and employs that speculation and innuendo to execute a drive-by-shooting. This is not journalism.

In The Washington Post, University of Pennsylvania professor Jonathan Zimmerman argues that one-off courses in "ethnic studies" do not sufficiently deal with the way ethnic and racial diversity is baked into American history and, in fact, help prevent a necessary integration of ethnic studies into the rest of the history curriculum. I always thought of ethnic studies departments, like gender studies, as transitional, necessary to provide long-neglected examinations, but that the goal had to be integration along the lines Zimmerman suggests. Now try selling that to the professors in those university departments!

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

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