Opinion

News



Artemio Franchi stadium, designed by Pier Luigi Nervi 90 years ago, in Florence, Italy, August 2009 (Wikimedia Commons/Andrzej Otrębski)



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Happy feast to us! The Feast of the Immaculate Conception is the patronal feast day of the United States of America. Here is the Monteverdi Choir Würzburg performing Johann Sebastian Bach's "Magnificat," one of his most beloved and beautiful choral works. The Monteverdi Ensemble accompanies the choir on period instruments, which add even more vibrancy to the work.

In The Washington Post, a do-nothing Congress is set to play Scrooge this year like Scrooge has never been played before: Millions of Americans are only a step away from being evicted from their homes, losing their unemployment assistance or sick leave, or watching their businesses shutter for good. They need help now, and Sen. Mitch McConnell is fretting about the deficit, a concern that did not bother him when he was passing tax cuts for the rich and large corporations.

On the other hand, Prof. Loretta J. Ross, who is teaching at Smith College, makes the case to her students, and via The New York Times to us, that instead of calling people out, we need to invite them in. A thousand blessings on the professor: Leave cancel culture to the conservatives. Liberals should rejoice in disagreement and debate, not try and out-woke each other.

The Democratic caucus in the U.S. House of Representatives selected Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney of New York to lead their campaign arm, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC). The New York Times reports:

> In an interview after his victory, Mr. Maloney said he would conduct a data-driven deep dive into what happened, prioritize outreach to Latino communities, *rethink costly polling and research operations that failed to predict Republicans' strength this year*, re-emphasize on-the-ground organizing complicated by the coronavirus pandemic and potentially scrap a ban on doing business with firms that work with Democratic primary challengers. (emphasis mine)

The prospect of campaigns that are not driven by pollsters — whom we now know to have more in common with astrologers than astronomers — is key to the Democratic

Party's success.

From "Go, Rebuild My House," a blog sponsored by Sacred Heart University, Myroslaw Tataryn, a Ukainian Greco-Catholic priest and professor emeritus at St. Jerome's University, looks at "the other pandemic," the blatant disregard for facts that has infected many nations. He is especially critical of those who wrap themselves in religion to justify their willful ignorance of reality.

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From The New York Times, an interesting examination of a debate in Florence where the new American owner of ACF Fiorentina, the city's soccer team, wants a new stadium, and architectural historians want to preserve the landmark Artemio Franchi stadium, designed by Pier Luigi Nervi. I am biased: I hate most poured concrete buildings, but Nervi's works are the exception to prove the rule. He had a hand in the Cathedral of St. Mary in San Francisco, for example, and the Sports Palace for the 1960 Olympics in Rome, and the Tour de la Bourse in Montreal. The stadium in Florence needs some TLC, but it should be preserved.

A very interesting take on the crisis in the church from Larry Chapp, a former professor of theology at DeSales University, who has a blog called "Gaudium et Spes 22." I can't say I agree with everything he writes, but this paragraph should make everyone stand up and pay attention:

> My claim, therefore, is that the fundamental crisis in the Church today is not rooted, primarily, in sexual perversion. It is rooted, rather, in the idolatry of worldly comfort, which I take to be the very essence of the bourgeois spirit. It is an idolatry made respectable (and therefore unrecognized as idolatry) by the Church's modern acceptance of the Enlightenment's co-optation of the Kingdom of God by politics and economics. This entails as well the *de facto*, practical atheism that ensues when God's Transcendence comes to be viewed competitively over and against our worldly fulfillment. In such a bourgeois regime, where Christianity has been tamed and has become just one more aid or help to our self-improvement in this life (Sh[c]memann's genius insight), the Kingdom of God has to be gutted of its true supernaturally transformative

> power and replaced with either the ridiculous Gospel of prosperity or the totalizing social/political Gospel of the Left. And, as Schmemann further points out, our status as *homo adorans*, as primarily in our essence "worshipers of the true God", is thus replaced by *homo faber*, or humanity viewed as a mere economic commodity, either as a producer or as a consumer, and as a forger of brave new worlds in the here and now.

There is much else here that warrants attention.

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