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Utah State Capitol and buildings shrouded in smog in downtown Salt Lake City Dec. 12, 2017.

Only a full-scale mobilization that creates good paying jobs in the sustainable energy sector will meet the need to care for creation and bring the economy back from the recession we are in. The Utah State Capitol and buildings are seen shrouded in smog in downtown Salt Lake City Dec. 12, 2017. (CNS/Reuters/George Frey)



by Michael Sean Winters

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December 10, 2020
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At Politico, Congressman Raul Grijalva urges President-elect Joe Biden to go big on climate change.

> For too long, "climate" policy has been treated as a discrete bucket of ideas divorced from our wider reality. It's now clear that our entire national policy portfolio — economic development, transportation planning, housing and urban renewal, agricultural practices, not to mention oil and gas drilling — is really about climate change and how we intend to deal with it. It's not just the elephant in the room. It's the whole room.

He is correct. Whatever you thought of the "Green New Deal" from the standpoint of environmental policy, we need it to help rebuild a post-COVID economy in 2021. Only a full-scale mobilization that creates good paying jobs in the sustainable energy sector will meet the need to care for creation and bring the economy back from the recession we are in. And by January 20, the economy will be in a whole lot worse shape than it is today.

At Patheos, Brian Fraga looks at the Catholic presence on Parler, the conservative site that seeks to be an alternative to Twitter. I make it a point to check in with EWTN to see what conservative Catholics are saying, but I can't bring myself to open an account on Parler, so kudos to Fraga for checking it out. Looks like no one is missing much.

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In The Washington Post, Michael Gerson has a splendid send-up of Eric Metaxas and other evangelicals who are defending Trump's effort to overturn the election: "This is seditious and sacrilegious in equal measure," he writes, then adding, "There is something pathetic about Metaxas's panting desire to be cruise director on Trump's sinking ship." Splendid. Remember, though, what he says about Metaxas could be said of the Catholic culture warriors, too: They discredit religion. Gerson, on the other hand, concludes his piece with an extraordinarily beautiful reflection on the season:

> The Advent narratives are filled with waiting people: Mary, Zechariah, Elizabeth, Simeon, Anna. They lived in patient expectation and were receptive to the Good News when it arrived. Their hope did not come as the result of a battle. It came like a seed planted in the ground. Like the sun rising in defiance of night. Like a child growing within his mother.

Metaxas is not the only religious zealot whose politics are causing scandal. The Institute for Human Ecology at the Catholic University of America sent me an email about a forthcoming event entitled, "Unwinding the Administrative State: Progress, Setbacks, and the Road Ahead" — more evidence that the bishops' own university is walking down the libertarian path. The announcement states: "Panelists will discuss legal and legislative routes available for reining in arbitrary administrative

lawmaking power, the discrimination religious Americans face at the hands of the administrative state, and the effects of COVID-19 on administrative power inflation." Shortly afterwards, I saw an article in The Washington Post reporting that the D.C. metro area had passed 500,000 coronavirus cases. I guess the bishops' university is more concerned with limiting the "deep state" than it is with saving human lives.

What is happening to the Republican Party? I confess I was worried this scenario of casting doubt on the election was likely if the election had been close, but it wasn't. Very few Republican leaders have had the courage to stand up and call out the nonsense. Politico reports on Lt. Gov. Geoff Duncan of Georgia who merely made the pragmatic argument that this unhinged attack on the legitimacy of the election results is hurting the GOP brand. The next time one of these Republicans voices concern about the Constitution, the rest of us should laugh. But it is no laughing matter. How is this not sedition?

At Civilta Cattolica, Jesuit Fr. Drew Christiansen looks at the crisis of American democracy. I agree with much of what he writes, but his failure to note, or even mention, the role that neo-liberal economics, and the ability of President Ronald Reagan to convince people that it would really help them, is a major flaw. His survey of history also fails to mention the Gilded Age, the start of the progressive era, the Depression, the New Deal, and the role of organized labor in creating the American middle class. Economics is not the only, or necessarily the largest, part of the story — and Christiansen ably considers other cultural and political factors — but it is a part.

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