Opinion



St. Pierre de Chartreuse Monastère in the French Alps, 2011 (Wikimedia Commons/Thierry de Villepin)



by Michael Sean Winters

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According to a survey by the U.S. Census Bureau, 35.3% of Americans are "living in households not current on rent or mortgage where eviction or foreclosure in the next two months is either very likely or somewhat likely." Stop and think about that fact for a moment: More than a third of Americans went to bed last night afraid that they could soon lose the roof over their heads. And the Republicans in Congress are being stingy about a COVID-19 relief bill? People will be reaching for their pitchforks by the time Joe Biden is sworn in. Let's hope the Democrats rise to the occasion.

From The Washington Post, a report on early voting statistics in the Georgia Senate runoffs. At this stage, 1.3 million Georgians have already voted, a remarkable number for a runoff. Democrats hold a slight edge, but it is less than the lead they had at this point before the general election, which Biden won by only 11,779 votes out of almost 5 million cast.

U.S. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez may be overwhelmingly popular with Twitter, but not so much with her colleagues. The Democratic caucus' Steering and Policy Committee voted to give Rep. Kathleen Rice a coveted seat on the Energy and Commerce Committee. Rice beat out Ocasio-Cortez by a margin of 46 to 13. The vote was by secret ballot, so the result was not due to posturing. Politico has the story.

In case 2020 has not had enough bad news, according to this report at The New York Times, neo-Nazis have been infiltrating Germany's decentralized police forces. Death threats have been traced to police computers. Extremist chat rooms for police have been discovered. This should alarm everyone.

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At Where Peter Is, Mike Lewis looks at the latest outrage from Bishop Joseph Strickland of Tyler, Texas, the bishops' spreading of lousy theology and rotten information about the COVID vaccines. Strickland and a few other so-called pro-life leaders are upset because stem cells from aborted fetuses were used to create stem cell lines that may have been used in some of the research to create the vaccine. The bishops of Colorado issued a pastoral letter telling Catholics they can take some

vaccines but not others. The Vatican has said there is no illicit cooperation with evil in getting the vaccines, as has the U.S. bishops' conference. Denver Archbishop Samuel Aquila is a culture warrior, and Strickland is that particular kind of person who is not going to let a little thing like facticity get in the way.

At the Working-Class Perspectives blog, Carnegie Mellon University's Kathy Newman explores some of the working-class themes of holiday movies, as well as the amount of work — most of it good paying union jobs — that goes into making a movie.

From the New York Times, a story about Chartreuse and the monks who make it. I know we all spend a lot of time criticizing the church, often with good reason, but it is good to remember that these austere monks are also part of the church, and their constancy takes one's breath away.