Opinion
News
Demonstrators are seen near the Federal Correctional Complex in Terre Haute, Indiana, to sh

Demonstrators are seen near the Federal Correctional Complex in Terre Haute, Indiana, to show their opposition to the death penalty July 13, 2020. (CNS/Bryan Woolston, Reuters)



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The "most pro-life president in history" is leaving office in a bloodlust. How else to describe the Justice Department's determination to proceed with the execution of Lisa Montgomery? That judicial murder was carried out early yesterday morning. It happened after those "pro-life" justices on the Supreme Court signed off on it. The week after next is the annual March for Life. At last year's march, President Donald Trump spoke. I suggest sackcloth and ashes at this year's event.

At Politico, a report on efforts by the incoming Joe Biden team to minimize losses in the 2022 midterms. I am relieved to read this story. So much of the scuttlebutt coming from the transition teams has to do with internal Democratic Party squabbles, it is good to know someone is looking ahead. Also good to know that Biden is not going to repeat President Barack Obama's mistake of creating a parallel

organizing effort to that of the Democratic National Committee. Most of all, I hope they are looking for the Florida and Texas equivalents of Stacey Abrams in Georgia, someone who knows the state and is committed to organizing on the ground, not relying on a big-dollar ad campaign. This is not just about partisan politics. It turns out that the most important policies the country needs, like a big infrastructure bill, higher wages, and stronger unions, are also wildly popular.

In The Washington Post, Dana Milbank points out that impeachment may be insufficient insofar as it leaves too many Republicans like U.S. Rep. Jim Jordan of Ohio off the hook for their complicity in fomenting the lies that justified the violence. Trump may be gone in a week, but there are members of Congress who are not just guilty of believing nonsense, but of believing nonsense that undermines their oath to defend the Constitution.

At U.S. Catholic, Samantha Power discusses her Catholic faith and how it has shaped her idealistic approach to foreign policy. She has many interesting things to say but this paragraph really caught my eye:

> *My faith doesn't give me an optimism that things are going to turn out OK. I don't think that's something that comes naturally to me — to believe that everything's going to just get back on track. Instead I think my faith gives me a necessary resilience. If something isn't working, if the kind of cooperation that's needed across borders is not happening or the policies by different actors are getting less humane, having this lodestar of Jesus' teachings and life gives me an incentive to keep getting back up. Not because I think inevitably things are going to work out because God wants them to work out. But because I see that in order for anything to improve, it's going to require individuals to dust themselves off and keep at it.*

Power was just named to lead the USAID office where her sympathetic character and razor-sharp mind can help restore U.S. assistance to suffering peoples around the globe.

At Working-Class Perspectives, the blog put out by the Kalmanovitz Initiative at Georgetown, Sarah Attfield from the University of Technology Sydney details some of the ways workers are fighting back against efforts to use the pandemic as an excuse to roll back protections and wages. Governments, especially those in liberal hands, better pay attention to the frustrations that are out there or they risk pushing

more working-class voters into the hands of right-wing populists.

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In these stressful, depressing times, we grab a bit of respite where we can. From Classicfm, here are 11 pieces of the happiest music ever written. The list provides us all with a good parlor game during this bleak winter: What pieces of music — or painting or sculpture — would you put on the list of artworks that make you feel happy? Pensive? Grateful? More time with art and less time with arguments is surely part of what our culture needs to do to recover from our current dysfunction.

Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea MAXIMA culpa. Last week I included three links to performances by the late great soprano Monserrat Caballé. I misidentified one of them as one of Elisabetta's arias from Donizetti's "Roberto Devereux." Alas, I got my queens confused. In fact, it was from the last scene in Donizetti's "Maria Stuarda." But, being Christians, we know that sometimes a "culpa" is a "felix culpa" so here is Caballé singing an aria, "E Sara in questi orribili momenti... Vivi ingrato...," from "Roberto Devereux." It, too, demonstrates her beautiful voice, capable of articulating pianissimos like no one else in her time, and for which she rightly became known as "La Superba."