Opinion

News



A TWA Lockheed L-1011 TriStar jumbo jet, pictured in May 1989 (Flickr/Aero Icarus)



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From PBS, an in-depth look at the fact that while millions of people are looking for work, there is still a shortage of trained tradespeople. Why? In part because of the stigma that still attaches to attending a trade school and the work that comes from it, even though the median income for electricians and plumbers is close to that of workers with a bachelor's degree.

Relatedly, in The New York Times, a report on the Bureau of Labor Statistics' projections about post-pandemic growth and loss. The part of the economy that will suffer the most long-lasting damage is the transportation and entertainment sector. That sector includes many people who do not even have a high school diploma, let alone a college degree. These are people who are marginalized in our society and they have a claim on our resources far more pressing than many others who are snagging headlines.

At The Progressive, C.M. Lewis looks at the anti-unionization industry that is being brought in to help Amazon fight a union organizing effort at one of its distribution centers. These anti-union groups include law firms and consultancy groups, and they date back to the 1970s. They try and convince workers not to form a union, sometimes with questionable legal tactics. Wouldn't it be nice to see the Catholic Church at the forefront of efforts to defend the right to organize?

At Politico, a look at the failure of the power grid in Texas — and California. Just goes to show that while elected officials work hard to frame a catastrophe so that the blame falls elsewhere, sometimes the answers are found not in politics, but in engineering. In any case, more extreme weather will be with us for awhile, and there are some good-paying jobs to be had updating our power grids.

The New York Times looks at the early campaigning for a Supreme Court nomination . I was one of those who thought presidential candidate Joe Biden made a mistake when he promised in advance to nominate a Black woman to the high court, but it has the happy consequence that the case is being made to look beyond those with Ivy League credentials. Still, it is outrageous that while many of those quoted in this piece talk about the importance of different kinds of "life experience," none even acknowledges the most important thing lacking on the current Supreme Court: someone with extensive experience in the other branches of government. Justice Sandra Day O'Connor was the last justice to have served in a legislature.

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You wouldn't think you would need to defend the inclusion of Shakespeare in the canon of texts we should expect all students to learn. Alas, we live in strange times. In the event, Kathleen Parker, writing at The Washington Post, has done the heavy lifting with a truly balanced, non-hysterical look at the role of canons, their need for expansion and the necessity of context.

From the "Go, Rebuild My Church" blog sponsored by Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut, Colleen Dulle looks at Pope Francis' on-going commitment to synodality and why the U.S. bishops should embrace it also. She makes the point that needs to be made again and again: "Synodality is not necessarily a process of democratization." In fact, I would delete the adverb "necessarily."

Last week, I linked to an article about the Boeing 747, which will no longer be built for commercial traffic. The nostalgia for the great jet has produced a flurry of other articles including this one at Simple Flying about the Lockheed L-1011 Tristar, one of the three great jumbo jets of the era. It never became as popular as the Boeing 747 or the Douglas DC-10, but it may have been the best of them, with less noise and a beautiful, streamlined profile. Eastern Airlines flew them from both New York and Boston to Puerto Rico, so I flew on them quite often as a child. At New York's JFK airport, the Eastern Airlines terminal is where Terminal 1 now is, and it was adjacent to the Pan Am terminal, now Terminal 2, so you could compare the Pan Am 747s with the Eastern L-1011 "Whisperliners" as they were called. I loved them both.