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Orange lava flowing down dark volcano at night

Lava flows from Mount Fagradalsfjall on the Reykjanes Peninsula following recent eruptions near Reykjavík, Iceland, March 27, 2021. (CNS/Reuters/Cat Gundry-Beck)



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At America magazine, Msgr. John Strynkowski has a very fine and very important article. The problem is not theodicy, as the unfortunate headline suggests ("I've been a priest for 50 years and still struggle with the problem of evil"). What is important, and I hope seminal, is that Strynkowski is sketching the starting point for discussion between those theologians who focus on Catholic social teaching and those in the Communio school who take *Gaudium et Spes* #22 as their organizing principle. He writes:

> Can we or do we have a Christian metaphysics that is based on the phenomenon of passive and active dispossession? Metaphysics asks universal questions and dispossession is a universal phenomenon. It might be objected that I am raising more a question of anthropology, but I want

to suggest that dispossession is inextricable from human existence.

I think the issue is both/and: metaphysics and anthropology. But no matter. The idea of Jesus, the new Adam, revealing humankind to itself in his radical dispossession, is a point of departure for discussion between two groups of theologians who do not often cross paths. If there were a theological equivalent of the Indianapolis 500, I would say, "Ladies and gentlemen, start your engines." And big kudos to Strynkowski.

From NPR, a comparison of voting laws in Georgia and Colorado. Earlier this week, after Major League Baseball announced that it was moving the All-Star Game from Atlanta to Denver to protest the new restrictive voter law in the Peach State, Republicans started complaining that Colorado law was more restrictive than the new Georgia law, citing the fact that Georgia allows 17 days for early voting and Colorado only allows 15. This ignores the fact that most people in Colorado vote by mail. In fact, all voters get a ballot in the mail two weeks before the election and can mail it in or drop it off at a variety of places. Maybe the U.S. bishops' conference's new "preeminent concern" about politics should be telling the truth.

At The Hill, a look at Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen's call for a global minimum corporate tax. Here is an idea whose time has come. It would end the ability of multinational companies to shop around for tax havens and force them to pay their fair share of taxes. It should even appeal to the free marketers at the Cato Institute, though I suspect they will be loath to voice the objection: Deciding where to locate your business based on tax policy is a distortion of market principles, is it not?

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In The New York Times, Adam Liptak looks at a new study that demonstrates the degree to which the U.S. Supreme Court has become more friendly to religious organizations over the past 50 years. A second study by Zalman Rothschild of the Stanford Law Center concluded that justices' partisan affiliations now indicate where they will align on free exercise cases, which was not the case previously. Frighteningly, but I fear accurately, Zalman told Liptak: "The politicization of religious freedom has infiltrated every level of the federal judiciary." This is an additional variant of the increased ideological polarization of the legal profession, or at least of those who practice constitutional law and end up serving as judges. It is

not good for the country. I do not see a way out of it either.

Are you sitting down? I am not shy about criticizing Bishop Robert Barron, but today I would like to praise him. His Word on Fire ministries is publishing a book on Catholic social teaching. As Barron explains in a new video, the book begins with a compendium of key magisterial texts, but the latter section includes writings from earlier Catholic writers such as the church fathers St. Thomas Aquinas and Bartolomé de las Casas. For many years, I was disturbed that the way we teach Catholic social teaching left students with the impression that it just dropped out of the sky in 1891 when Pope Leo XIII published *Rerum Novarum*. In fact, regular readers will recall NCR publishing a paper on the Scriptural and doctrinal foundations of Catholic social teaching by the same Msgr. John Strynkowski whom I noted above.

From the group "Photographing Iceland," more beautiful pictures of the erupting volcano. Simply stunning.