Opinion
News



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The Biden administration won its first major diplomatic victory, as the finance ministers of the G7 nations agreed to a global minimum corporate tax rate. Back in January, I called for just such a minimum corporate tax, but the Biden administration did me one better. They recognized that unless other nations established something similar, large multinational corporations could simply move their profits offshore. Getting the G7 on board is a huge step. Newsweek has the story.

Along the same lines, at Foreign Affairs, Joseph Stiglitz, Todd Tucker and Gabriel Zucman argue that increased taxation on the rich is absolutely necessary in order to save capitalism. The numbers are shocking, for example:

> The global average corporate income tax rate fell from 49 percent in 1985 to 24 percent in 2018. Today, according to the latest available estimates, corporations around the world shift more than $650 billion in profits each year (close to 40 percent of the profits they make outside the countries where they are headquartered) to tax havens, primarily Bermuda, Ireland, Luxembourg, Singapore, and a number of Caribbean islands.

The public sector has been starved while the richest of the rich put their money where the common good can't touch it. It is a scandal.

In The New York Times, a look at the changing politics of the American Civil Liberties Union, and it is not pretty. I do not share the extreme views of First Amendment rights that animated the ACLU's founding, but I was also glad they were there, reminding the rest of us that empowering the government to regulate speech is worse than highly offensive speech, that drug dealers have rights too, and that conscientious objection is an honorable means of democratic expression. Now? They placed "reproductive rights," which are not mentioned in the First Amendment, ahead of religious freedom, which is, and I smelled something fishy. Now some of the advocates quoted in the piece are advocating that they compromise their stance on free speech. Liberals are gutting liberalism of its meaning and vocation, and you can't say I didn't warn you.

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At Politico, Yardena Schwartz asks if Israeli politics can get back to normal after 12 years of governance by soon-to-be-former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Some of the questions are similar to those facing the U.S. after Trump, and some are different, but one lesson shines through for our Republican friends: If the grownups in the room come together and conclude that a particular leader is bad for the country, they can isolate him. They may have to make some strange political bedfellows to do it, but it can be done.

Relatedly, at Brookings, Tamara Cofman Wittes argues that the recent round of violence in the region is what the "death of the two-state solution looks like." She urges politicians and policymakers on all sides to come back to the table and renew talks. A two-state solution may seem far off, but we just witnessed the alternative and it is, as Wittes writes, "horrific."

From Go, Rebuild My House, the blog about church reform sponsored by Sacred Heart University, Michael Higgins recalls attending the 1985 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops in Rome and compares it with the strides Pope Francis has made in reviving this form of ecclesial governance. Higgins notes that the 1985 synod "was the public genesis of a fiery and divisive debate that would unfold in subsequent decades,

specifically during the pontificate of Benedict XVI around a *hermeneutic of continuity* " (emphasis in original), and the adverb "around" is carefully chosen: Benedict himself never called for a hermeneutic of continuity in his famous 2005 address to the Curia, but a hermeneutic of reform that includes elements of both continuity and discontinuity. Higgins also gets high marks for employing the almost forgotten adjective "temerarious"! Seriously: You can't read too many articles about synodality this year, folks, and articles like Higgins' show how far we have come in a relatively short time.

At the blog Where Peter Is, Mike Lewis looks at the state of the church in the U.S. in advance of the bishops' spring meeting. It is a deep dive, jam-packed with links and insights. It is also long, so block out plenty of time to read it.

For all my fellow gardeners out there, this article in The Washington Post captures some of the admittedly small frustrations that climate change is already causing. In D.C., there were all sorts of wonderful plants I could grow that do not overwinter here in Connecticut, but now there are beautiful perennials from my mother's garden that I planted in D.C. and I wonder if they will survive the increasingly hot summers.