Opinion
News



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At Politico, the inimitable Jack Shafer looks at the drop in cable news viewership and in visitors to a range of online news websites. The reason? Donald Trump is out of the White House. Shafer writes:

> What the drop-off actually signifies is that news readers and viewers have resumed their previous consumption habits after several years of gorging on news the way a drunk who crashes his yacht into the island of free pizza might scarf down a hundred slices of pepperoni. Now that Trump Island is gone, news consumers have happily gone cold turkey.

That is why we columnists love Shafer — he writes sentences like those.

In The Hill, Catholic University of America politics professor John White argues that voters may not abandon President Joe Biden over his decision to end the war in Afghanistan, and he looks at the history of presidential approval ratings to make the point. The key is how many voters stick with the president "until the last dog dies," that is, how many voters stick with the president no matter what. So far, Biden has not come anywhere near the lows other presidents reached.

Relatedly, in The New York Times, Jennifer Medina reports that voters in one California congressional district were reluctant to blame Biden for the chaos that attended the evacuation from Kabul. Even Trump supporters thought the evil of the chaos was outweighed by the good of extricating ourselves from the conflict.

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I was happy to join theologian Leo Madden of Ohio Dominican University on the "All Sides With Ann Fisher" radio show at WOSU on Aug. 31 to discuss conservative schismatics. Before our segment, Ann had a sedevacantist priest on, so we had to shadow box with his conspiracy theories for a bit but moved on to a substantive discussion in relatively short order. I am always happy to be cast in the role of defender of the faith! And of Pope Francis!

Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa. Earlier this week, I called attention to an article at Colossal featuring photographs of modern churches. I said that these beautiful churches showed that not all post-conciliar churches were ugly. An astute reader pointed out that many of the churches were built before Vatican II. I could make an argument that the important thing is that some Catholic traditionalists repudiate everything modern, even if it was built in the 1940s and not the 1970s, and that these churches confirm that modernity was capable of beauty. But that is not what I wrote Tuesday and I regret the error.

From Classicfm, this performance of Verdi's "Va, pensiero" from his opera "Nabucco" is not a typical flash mob in which one person starts, another joins, and pretty soon you have the full effect. But listening to 900-plus musicians at a shopping mall, under the baton of Kent Nagano, is still pretty thrilling.

Monday is Labor Day and the Catholic Labor Network will sponsor a video-streamed Labor Mass celebrated by Cardinal Wilton Gregory, the archbishop of Washington. You can tune in for the Mass here.