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Members of United Mine Workers of America and other labor leaders bow in prayer while picketing July 28, 2021, outside BlackRock's headquarters in New York City as part of the union's strike at Warrior Met Coal Mine. (CNS/Reuters/Brendan McDermid)



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At New York magazine, a look at how the Colorado Transportation Department is doing its part to fight climate change by only funding projects that will lower carbon emissions. If Democrats are smart, they will highlight all the jobs these new projects create. The transition from a fossil fuel economy will not only disrupt routines, but will cost some people their livelihoods, and until they see that there are good paying jobs at the end of the transition, they are not going to support politicians who are serious about climate change.

I am not entirely unsympathetic with those people on the political and cultural right who think certain trends in U.S. culture are worrisome, even dangerous. But every time I try to get beyond that basic sympathy we should hold toward all other human persons, something happens that makes me recoil. The lionization of Kyle Rittenhouse, as witnessed by the reception he received at a conservative conference Monday night, is one of those things. There is real evil in contemporary conservativism. My sane conservative friends need to stand up to this, as loudly and persistently as they can.

The "Great Resignation," combined with several strikes and movement toward higher wages, have made many of us optimistic about how changes in the economy might improve workers' power within the economy. At the Working-Class Perspectives blog, John Russo of the Kalmanovitz Center at Georgetown University warns that the data may not be as promising as it seems, and that there are a host of reasons for the labor shortage — some of them dictated by management in search of lower labor costs.

We all know that unions are good for workers, and that papal social doctrine has blessed workers' right to organize for 120 years. Now, a report from the Economic Policy Institute shows that unions are good for everybody, spreading solidarity in ways that strengthen their communities and democracy itself.

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Relatedly, at The New Yorker, Benjamin Wallace-Wells speaks with political philosopher Michael Sandel, who is more optimistic about the future for the Democrats than most, because he sees Joe Biden as a vehicle for the kind of post-meritocratic, dignity-of-work politics that recently catapulted Olaf Scholz into the chancellorship in Germany. Wallace-Wells is appropriately skeptical that Biden has moved as far as Scholz, and Sandel admits that it is "a work in progress." My question is this: Does any other Democrat have an approach to rebranding the party that has more potential than Sandel's vision to garner votes among working-class, non-college voters, without whom Democrats are doomed to continue getting clobbered outside of highly educated urban enclaves along the coasts?

Some friends chastise me for complaining about woke political culture, but I remain convinced that it feeds a narrative about the left that will get Trump reelected. Frank Fleming of the parody site The Babylon Bee pointed out an additional difficulty: It makes the life of people who have to do parody for a living difficult because, well, the politically correct have conjured a form of self-parody better than any comedian could devise. He was commenting about an apology from the organizers of the Women's March for a fundraising email that stated their average donation for the week was $14.92. "It was an oversight on our part to not make the connection to a year of colonization, conquest, and genocide for Indigenous people, especially before Thanksgiving," the apology stated. Someone must have gotten triggered! You can't make this stuff up.

The time draws nigh. The Advent anticipation has built and tomorrow night we will begin Christmas, celebrating the Incarnation. This great mystery of our faith was made possible by our God's relentless, limitless love for us and by Mary's willingness to play her part, her "yes," her *fiat*. Luke — without whom what would Christmas even look like? — is the only evangelist to record the great hymn of praise by which Mary responds to her cousin Elizabeth, the Magnificat. Here it is set to music by Johann Sebastian Bach, BWV 243, and performed by the Netherlands Bach Society.

This will be my last posting before the great feast. I wish all our readers a blessed and holy Christmas.