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Migrant worker Cesar Lopez, 33, cleans the fields near Salinas, California, March 30, 2020. (CNS/Reuters/Shannon Stapleton)



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In The New York Times, a report on conservative Catholic Leonard Leo's Marble Freedom Trust, which just received a $1.6 billion donation. That is billion with a "B." What is more, the contribution was structured so that the donor, Barre Seid, would not pay taxes on his company's profits. Everything about this — the excessive influence of big money in politics, the lack of accountability by political nonprofits, the goal of avoiding taxes — stinks, and undermines democracy. It is the kind of thing that should worry the bishops' conference, but it won't.

In The Sacramento Bee, columnist Melinda Henneberger asks why it is so difficult for California Gov. Gavin Newsom to choose between farmworkers who wish to organize themselves and join the union, and rich growers who wish to deprive those workers of their right to organize — and the fear that they will insist on better working conditions. The more we learn about Newsom, the less there is to like about him. Bishop Joseph Brennan of Fresno, who marched with the farmworkers, displayed a regrettable evenhandedness between workers and plutocrats when asked about the workers' concerns, but at least he marched with them.

NBC4 in Washington reports that the U.S. government is buying 150,000 metric tons of grain and shipping it from Ukraine to areas experiencing famine, such as the Horn of Africa. The suffering caused by Vladimir Putin's evil war does not only affect the peoples of Ukraine and Russia, but people throughout the world who rely on Ukrainian produce.

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At the Go, Rebuild My House blog sponsored by Sacred Heart University, Canadian theologian and church historian Michael Higgins writes about Pope Francis' recent visit to his native country. The phrase "Victorian high mindedness and arrogance" is splendid and invites us all to consider the ways our own attempts at high-mindedness might look a century or so in the future.

From Vatican News, a report on the Holy Father's message to the annual meeting of the group Communion and Liberation in Rimini. The theme of the meeting this year is "A Passion for the Person," and the message from the pope, rich in Catholic and humanistic themes, could not be more different from the worldview often communicated by those Catholics who have sought to defend abortion rights or euthanasia, or from the worldview communicated sometimes by those Catholics keen to restrict abortion rights and euthanasia. The pope, like the founder of Communion and Liberation, Luigi Giussani, reaches deeper into the human heart and makes sense of the outrageous claim in our Scriptures: "For in Him all things were created" (Colossians 1:16).

In The Washington Post, columnist David Ignatius shines a light on former president Donald Trump's "point man" for issues related to the FBI search at Mar-a-Lago, Kash Patel. The most interesting fact about Patel and his reckless attacks on devoted civil servants? He has written a children's book "in which the evil Hillary Queenton tries to spread lies against King Donald claiming that he’s working with the Russionians — until a knight called Kash exposes the plot." How clever. The item most likely to anger Trump? Ignatius recounts Trump's efforts to place Patel in high-ranking positions in the government, such as deputy director of the CIA. But when White House chief of staff Mark Meadows approached CIA Director Gina Haspel about the proposed nomination, "Haspel said she would quit rather than take Patel, and after Meadows conveyed that threat to Trump, he backed down. ..." Can Trump survive politically if his followers find out he backed down? To a career civil servant, aka, "deep state" official?

At Aleteia, Daniel Esparza writes about the Catholic origins of gazpacho. Turns out the Spanish word is derived from the Greek word, found in the synoptic Gospels, for "treasury." When the collection basket was passed in churches in rural Spain before the use of paper currency, people would put in a variety of things, including the basics of gazpacho: stale bread, vegetables dipped in water, vinegar and oil. Tomatoes came later, as they were unknown until the Spanish brought them back from Peru.