Opinion
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Women take part in a rally in Beirut Sept. 21, days after the Iranian authorities announced the death of Mahsa Amini, 22, who died after being arrested in Tehran for allegedly wearing a hijab or headscarf in an "improper" way. (CNS/Reuters/Mohamed Azakir)



by Michael Sean Winters

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In The New York Times, Karim Sadjadpour, of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, looks at the protests in Iran and what they portend for the future relationship of the state to society in that country. History teaches us that popular new regimes can often be as destabilizing as the autocratic old regimes they overthrow, but it is still exhilarating to witness these brave protesters demanding freedom.

At AL.com, a report on 198 congregations leaving the North Alabama Conference of the United Methodist Church. The reason? Same-sex marriage. The decision comes

after 249 United Methodist churches in Eastern North Carolina disaffiliated with the denomination on the same issue last month. The clash of moral issues with ecclesiological ones is the rock on which the ship of synodality in the Catholic Church will crash and sink unless the leaders of the synodal process begin speaking clearly about the need for the process to serve the unity of the church.

For all the chatter about Herschel Walker being a terrible candidate — and he was! — Dave Wasserman of the Cook Political Report posted a map that shows the consistency in Georgia's partisan divide between 2020 and 2022. In 2020, Raphael Warnock was the challenger and he defeated an incumbent, Sen. Kelly Loeffler. It is remarkable how little change there was.

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At The New Yorker, Jeannie Suk Gersen of Harvard Law School looks at the Respect for Marriage Act and concludes, rightly, that it both protects same-sex marriage rights and religious liberty rights. It is the kind of compromise courts only accomplish after many cases, but that legislatures can — and should — accomplish in a single bill. To the extent the extremists on either side are unhappy is the exact measure that the compromise is sound.

Normally, academic fads can be safely ignored. But "common good constitutionalism " — which is the brainchild of Catholic integralists like Harvard law professor Adrian Vermeule — is crossing over into mainstream discussion. It has adopted an innocuous name for itself, and it has a valuable critique of modern liberal culture. It is also exceedingly dangerous and, as writer Leon Wieseltier has shown, intellectually fatuous. Wieseltier's critique is liberal in its essence. We need intelligent Catholic critiques as well. Theologians: Start your engines!

At the Middle West Review, editor-in-chief Jon Lauck highlights the grim news that history professorships are disappearing throughout the Midwest. A similar article could be written about other regions. A nation that does not value teaching people how to research and write history is a country making itself vulnerable to the manipulation of its past in the interest of ideology. It should not surprise anyone that would-be demagogues would welcome this development.

In The Atlantic, Paul Elie reviews John McGreevey's book *Catholicism: A Global History from the French Revolution to Pope Francis*. Elie uses the review to frame contemporary Catholicism, noting rightly that it is flourishing in many ways even while it is exhausted and infirm in others. I suppose it goes with the territory — and I am as guilty of it as anybody — but these discussions always seem to focus overmuch on the church's relation with this world, and diminish its sense of the next world. It is that latter focus that still brings most people to their knees.