

[Opinion](#)



by Michael Sean Winters

[View Author Profile](#)

Follow on Twitter at [@michaelswinters](#)

[Join the Conversation](#)

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. [Learn more](#)

April 19, 2018

[Share on Facebook](#)[Share on Twitter](#)[Email to a friend](#)[Print](#)

At [wherepeteris.com](#), [Mike Lewis has published the second in his series](#) looking at EWTN's "The World Over" and its host Raymond Arroyo. In this article, Lewis looks at Arroyo's "papal posse" which routinely attacks and demeans Pope Francis. Bravo to Lewis for this in-depth look at the scandal that Arroyo and EWTN has become. To our friends in the Knights of Columbus, I ask: Why are you funding EWTN when it is so aggressively hostile to the Holy Father? To our friends in the hierarchy: Why are you going to the Knights of Columbus conventions while they continue to fund EWTN? Most knights love the pope and do not want their dues going to programming that undermines him.

April 17 was tax day, thanks to our New England tradition of celebrating the anniversary of the Battle of Lexington and Concord. Richard Trumka, president of the AFL-CIO, [issued a statement](#) arguing that the tax reforms passed by Congress and signed into law by President Donald Trump are working, and working as intended, which means that billions are going to very, very rich people and corporations but the rest of us are not going to see a dime.

Relatedly — and I have been saving this — last December, the National Catholic Register, which is owned by EWTN, ran an article called "[A Catholic Approach to Tax Reform](#)." The problem is the article consisted of a conversation with Jay Richards of the Tim and Steph Busch School of Economics at the Catholic University of America and Richards rejects Catholic social teaching in favor of libertarian economics. Richards also has a weekly show on EWTN in which he waves the capitalist flag with a Romper Room-level sophistication.

Speaking of Catholic University of America, [this article at the Chronicle for Higher Education](#) examines the latest proposal to cut 35 faculty positions at the school, which is never a sign of good health. Enrollment is down, and the article examines the degree to which that drop is related to the school's sense of Catholic identity. This is a complicated issue, but I would note two things that jump out at me. First, whenever administrators bring in a raft of consultants, either they are way over their heads or they are insecure and need to hide behind the perception of authority a consultant can confer. Second, it was Fr. David O'Connell, now bishop of Trenton, New Jersey, who really helped kindle the university's sense of its Catholic identity and enrollments were just fine on his watch. Enrollments started to tank when John Garvey became president and the definition of "Catholic identity" began to narrow considerably.

On a happier note, kudos to Villanova University and especially professor Massimo Faggioli for assembling an all-star line-up to examine the pontificate of Francis. While the opponents of Francis continue to repeat the same tired mantras, Faggioli and others are doing what academics are supposed to do, exploring the riches of the church's teaching, analyzing it from different theological and historical perspectives, raising questions to be sure but never indulging in propagandistic attacks on Francis. [Christopher White at Crux has the story](#).

Advertisement

[At Politico](#), a look at New Jersey's 2nd Congressional District race, in which a conservative Democrat, Jeff Van Drew, appears likely to take the seat being vacated by Republican Frank LoBiondo. Liberal activists, who seem to mistake the 2nd district for Greenwich Village, want a progressive nominee. But, what worries me most is this: One of the two issues that Van Drew felt a need to move to

his left? Requiring parental notification in advance of an abortion.

At Foreign Policy, a look at the front runner [in this year's presidential election in Mexico](#). The need to continue to build the rule of law and cultivate a culture of democratic norms unknown in Mexico for most of the 20th century, is the outstanding task of the next president but it must be accompanied by economic policies that help the people.

In the New York Times, bioethicist Chris Kaposy makes "[the ethical case for having a baby with Down syndrome](#)." Wow. So, now we have to make a case for that? I was on a call last week sponsored by the ACLU of Pennsylvania which opposes a bill that would make it illegal to procure an abortion because the child has Down syndrome. Now, I think that is probably a bad law because I do not see how you could enforce it. But, it was telling that the ACLU lawyer, when asked if she would support the right to have an abortion if a parent determined the child was gay, or on account of sex selection, said she was fine with that. The libertarianism of the left is as scary to me as that on the right.

[Michael Sean Winters covers the nexus of religion and politics for NCR.]

Editor's note: Don't miss out on Michael Sean Winters' latest: [Sign up to receive free newsletters](#), and we'll notify you when he publishes new [Distinctly Catholic](#) columns.