

Initiatives

In Support of Christians in the World

National Center for the Laity
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www.catholiclabor.org/NCL.htm

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Declaration Watch

The National Center for the Laity's 1977 charter, *A Chicago Declaration of Christian Concern*, is a standard reference for consideration of Vatican II's implementation in the U.S. For example, Fr. Charles Curran gives the *Declaration* thorough treatment in *The Social Mission of the U.S. Catholic Church* (Georgetown University Press [2011], 3240 Prospect St. NW, Washington, DC 20007; \$26.95).

Prior to Vatican II, says Curran, Catholicism distinguished between spiritual and temporal realms with emphasis on the spiritual. "Vatican II and subsequent developments changed this understanding of the twofold mission of the church," Curran writes. In fact, according to Vatican II, any dichotomy between faith and daily life is a grave error. The post-Vatican II church consciously attempts to transform the world and appreciates that the world somehow informs faith.

Ironically however, "since Vatican II involvement in the [internal] Church community has received much more emphasis than other areas of the mission of the laity," says Curran. He then summarizes the *Declaration* which says lay ministry (volunteer or paid) in a parish or diocese is "a wholesome and significant movement." But where is the training and support for the laity's apostolate in the world, particularly for daily involvement in work, family and neighborhood life?

Contrary to criticism, the *Declaration* and NCL do not want clergy and other Church employees to stay inside the sanctuary. All baptized have responsibility for the world. However, moralizing alone will not result in effective social justice. Change within a company, a legislature, a health care system or a public housing agency requires expert knowledge and sensitivity to the surroundings. Further, says NCL, a specific policy or social reform is not automatically the most moral alternative because it is endorsed by a Church employee, even a bishop. A policy is not good because it is Catholic; it is Catholic because it is true and good.

"Lay people have the indispensable and unique role in trying to transform all aspects of the temporal realm in their daily lives," Curran concludes. "The laity have the primary role...in working for structural change...even though their role seldom receives primary emphasis."

More on Curran's history and analysis in a future INITIATIVES. The original *Declaration* plus the NCL's recent *Nine Principles for Lay Initiative* are found in *Church, Chicago-Style* by Bill Droel (NCL, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$2.25). A forthcoming NCL booklet, titled *What Is Social Justice?*, positions the laity as unique *insiders* to institutional change.

Taking the Initiative For Peace

What could the connection be between an old man huddled over his desk in a home office in Boston and the revolutions unfolding throughout the Middle East?

It is the value of good work, especially work done over a long period of time at the highest level of competency that builds a peaceable world.

Gene Sharp, a former Harvard University researcher, has been writing for decades on nonviolence. No fancy office, no large staff. Just an old man at his keyboard day after day. Many of Sharp's writings are available for free download from his Albert Einstein Institution (PO Box 455, East Boston, MA 02128; www.aeinstein.org). His 1993 *From Dictatorship to Democracy* lays out the practical steps a committed citizenry can take to throw a dictator out of office--nonviolently. Sharp's theory is actually quite simple. Government depends on the consent of the governed. If people who are ruled by a dictator decide to withdraw that consent, the government will fall.

This does not mean that all nonviolent revolutionaries will be alive at the end of the revolution. Some will die. But two other important things are true about nonviolent revolutions: (1) far fewer people will die than in a violent uprising and (2) nonviolence works

when violence does not.

While they had been used before, Sharp's ideas began to gain attention in 2000 when young Serbian activists adopted Sharp's teachings to nonviolently overthrow the dictator Slobodan Milosevic. They have also been used to nonviolently oppose dictatorial regimes from Burma to the Ukraine. Most notably, they were the theoretical underpinning to the youth movement that nonviolently overthrew the Egyptian dictator, Hosni Mubarak.

Democracy has a future in Egypt today in large part because a man in Boston has gone to his keyboard every day, intent on doing good work at the highest level of competency. (*N.Y. Times*, 2/17/11; *Wall St. Journal*, 9/13/08)

A Facebook cybergroup, Youth of Egypt for Nobel Peace Prize (www.causes.com/causes/577715), advocates recognition for the young people in Egypt. It needs signatures.

Taking the Initiative *For Immigrant Workers*

Abused: the Postville Raid (Maya Media, 70 LaSalle St. #14G, New York, NY 10027; www.abusedthepostvilleraid.com) is a 90-minute documentary about the aftermath of a 2008 immigration raid on a meat processing plant in Iowa in which 389 were arrested. Parishes and schools can schedule a showing.

Filmmaker Luis Argueta made 29 trips to Iowa and 18 to Guatemala to get the story. *Abused* not only shows the plight of immigrant families but also the raid's toll on the economy and social fabric of a town. It even details the abuse of the legal system. Argueta shows that the law was not strenuously enforced in this case; instead, arbitrary treatment of workers became a public reactions fiasco.

Judge Mark Bennett sentenced some of the workers. The proceedings were "a travesty," he says in the film. Once the plea agreements were entered, "I didn't have the power to do anything about it [but] I was embarrassed to be a U.S. District Court judge that day." (*Des Moines Sunday Register*, 2/6/11)

Meanwhile, Sr. Mary McCauley, RSM continues to serve at St. Bridget's (135 W. Williams St., Postville, IA 52162). Within minutes of the 2008 raid she told workers and families: "Come to the church." There, over the past months, she coordinates social services and spiritual care.

The crisis revealed the mystery of

God's love through the Eucharist, McCauley told a January conference in Texas, "A Light to the Nations: Comprehensive Immigration Reform." Postville "is the story of the body of Christ," says McCauley. "Like the Eucharist, [it] is a story of commitment and brokenness. It is a story of hope and love, of pain and exploitation, of collaboration and of indefatigable fidelity." (*National Catholic Reporter* [2/4/11], PO Box 411009, Kansas City, MO 64141)

INITIATIVES' readers hardly need be reminded: St. Bridget's welcomes donations for its ministry.

Taking the Initiative *For Garment Workers*

The NFL Players Association (1133 20th St. NW, Washington, DC 20036; www.nflplayers.com) is in negotiations with the football teams' owners, known as the National Football League (280 Park Ave. #1500, New York, NY 10017; www.nfl.com). A lockout for the 2011 season is possible.

Meanwhile, the women who sew NFL T-shirts are paid piecework, eight cents per shirt. In the U.S. each shirt carries an NFL licensed logo and a \$25 price tag. The National Labor Committee (5 Gateway Center #600, Pittsburgh, PA 15222; www.nlcnet.org) is campaigning to put consumer pressure on the NFL to insist that its supplier, Ocean Sky International (Zona Franca, Edificio 2, KM 28 ½, Carretera a Comalapa Olocuilta, La Paz, El Salvador; www.oceanskyintl.com), increase pay to 16 cents in wages for each shirt. (*Houston Catholic Worker* [2/11], PO Box 70113, Houston, TX 77270; www.cjd.org)

Whatever the outcome in football's offseason, collective bargaining is the proper method for players and owners. The women in El Salvador do not enjoy a similar right. Maybe all stateside workers—football fans, football players, team executives and retailers—can look toward the common good and in doing so improve not only the situation in El Salvador, but their own as well.

Taking the Initiative *For Green Jobs*

Customers are increasingly asking for environmentally efficient construction and remodeling. Thus project managers and front line workers see a competitive advantage in

certificate training, as endorsed by Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (2101 L St. NW #500, Washington, DC 20037; www.usgbc.org). Blue Green Alliance Foundation (2828 University Ave. SE #200, Minneapolis, MN 55414; www.bluegreenalliance.org) is a premier organization that arranges LEED programs for workers (both those employed and the unemployed). They learn about insulation materials, building design, heating and cooling principles and more. (*The Union Advocate* [12/22/10], 411 Main St. #202, St. Paul, MN 55102)

Some resources connect workers to companies that specialize in green jobs, including Green Jobs Network (2150 Allston Way, Berkeley, CA 94704; www.greenjobs.net). A cyber-group, Green Jobs (www.sustainablebusiness.com), has a state-specific directory of jobs for executives and entry level workers. It also explains green investment opportunities.

Taking the Initiative *On Young Adults*

The majority of Catholic young adults do not participate in liturgy. It is wrong, however, to call them *former Catholics*, says demographer James Davidson of Purdue University. “It is true they don’t belong to local parishes or support the church in any other way... [But] when you get to know them a little better...you learn that many of them are still very Catholic and think of themselves that way.”

Not so, says Robert Putnam, co-author with Notre Dame’s David Campbell of *American Grace* (Simon & Schuster [2010], 1230 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10020; \$30). These young adults “are not Catholic despite [Davidson] wanting it to be so,” Putnam says. Those who are not religious show every tendency to become even less religious. With exceptions, non-worshipping young adult Catholics are not momentarily away.

Aligning religion with conservative politics (whatever its other merits) is not a strategy for attracting young adults, Campbell explains. A significant number avoid the church precisely because of its forays into the so-called *culture wars*. *American Grace* includes a chapter on the surprising attitudes of young adults toward abortion and lifestyle.

The three sociologists spoke in January before a capacity crowd at Fordham Center on

Religion and Culture (113 W. 60th St. #224F, New York, NY 10023; www.fordham.edu). Peggy Steinfeld, advisor to our National Center for the Laity, directs the Fordham Center. Bill McGarvey, another NCL advisor, spoke at the conference and he filed a report. (*The Tablet* [2/5/11], 1 King St. Cloisters, Clifton Walk, London, England W6 0GY and *Catholic New York*, 2/10/11)

Christianity must necessarily attend to in-house matters. The Christian tradition, however, will be vibrant to the extent young adults find it relevant to their careers and relationships. Please furnish INITIATIVES with any reports on young adults connecting the faith to their work—on the job and in the community.

Taking the Initiative *On Liturgy*

Steven Millies of the University of South Carolina wants to integrate “Catholic faith into social and political life.” His approach might surprise people.

Start with *individualism* as an underlying cause of the current recession, the prevalent fragility of family life, the high number of abortions, callousness toward immigrants, harshness in the workplace and other destructive trends. Against individualism, place as an antidote full, conscious and active liturgical participation.

This lofty proposition can be brought to a practical level, says Millies.

There might be good reasons for the proposed new English version of the liturgy, Millies continues. But he offers caution about one reason expressed by the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship: that the liturgy should be in a “sacred vernacular” different in “vocabulary, syntax and grammar” from “everyday speech.”

The goal is to connect “what happens around the altar [with] what we Christians do in the rest of our daily lives,” says Millies. But “if parishioners are alienated from the action of the Mass by language that seems strange to them, then the church risks encouraging Catholics to isolate their faith from their lives at work, at school, at home and in the public square.” (*America*, 106 W. 56th St., New York, NY 10019; 2/7/11)

Millies mentions Msgr. Reynold Hillenbrand (1904-1979) of Chicago, who said that liturgy plays the decisive role in humanizing society. He “firmly believed that the solution to

social problems [is] grounded in a return to the altar,” details Fr. Robert Tuzik in *Reynold Hillenbrand: the Reform of Catholic Liturgy and the Call to Social Action* (Liturgy Training Publications [2010], 3949 S. Racine Ave., Chicago, IL 60609; \$22).

Hillenbrand preached that sharing in Trinitarian life at the liturgy will inspire action on behalf of social justice. More profoundly, Hillenbrand says people are disposed to celebrate Mass precisely because of their action at work, in the family and in the community.

The opposite of *active liturgical participation* is *passive individualism*. Worship, Hillenbrand says, cannot be pietistic in the sense that people confine “redemption to the four walls of the church, as if it had no connection with life itself.” With such a mentality liturgy becomes only a backdrop for personal devotion.

Liturgical planners and priests also contribute to individualism when they give too high a regard to rubrics and ceremony for their own sake. Active participation puts the emphasis on the social and pastoral nature of the liturgy, says Hillenbrand.

Hillenbrand was perhaps the youngest seminary rector in the world when, at age 31, he was appointed to lead St. Mary of the Lake (1000 E. Maple Ave., Mundelein, IL 60060). His first talk there addressed individualism: Seminarians must look “beyond their own comfortable lives—to see suffering in the world, to have a heart for the unemployed, not to shy away from misery, but to feel the injustice of inadequate wages.” He went on to convene many conferences where the topics of social action and liturgical renewal were featured. He gave hundreds of talks blending the topics. (Tuzik includes a 16-page list of Hillenbrand’s talks and articles.) Hillenbrand also formed or advised many social action groups, including the Christian Family Movement, where reflection on liturgy was an essential part of each meeting’s format.

INITIATIVES welcomes reports about parishes and campus ministry centers: How is your liturgy connected to the quest for justice?

Work and Art

Readers are responding to INITIATIVES’ call for recommendations of contemporary fiction that treats work as a serious part of the story.

“Look at *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle*

by Daniel Wroblewski (Harper Collins [2009], 1000 Keystone Industrial Park, Scranton, PA 18512; \$16.99),” writes Hilary Ward Schnadt. “It is about a family of dog trainers and breeders—a job they consider a calling. Their work is central to the action of the story. This wonderful novel contains a number of allusions to Shakespeare’s plays.”

“A novel about work is *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett (Penguin [2009], 375 Hudson St., New York, NY 10014; \$24.95),” says Bob Doyle. “It is a civil rights story set in 1960s Mississippi. An amazing aspect is how the maids continue to do good work in the face of racial injustice.”

Keep the suggestions coming!

Work Prayers

New Job in NYC

“O God of Newness and New Beginnings, hear this emigrant prayer of your beloved one. New York, the Big Apple, is a great and awesome place with its skyscrapers, stores and bright lights of Broadway. New Work, which I am beginning, is not such a great place, but is more like a sour, green apple. O God, who is ever working on something new, help me, a beginner, to find joy in my new work... O God ...who has nothing to hide, make me a youthful adventurer, who with joy and trust find myself a beginner, again.” Amen.

--Fr. Edward Hays in *Psalms for Zero Gravity* (Forest of Peace [1998], PO Box 428, Notre Dame, IN 46556; \$16.95)

From the Great Workbench

America (106 W. 56th St., New York, NY 10019; 2/14/11) begins an “occasional series of short pieces that will feature workers’ thoughtful reflections...on their faith and work when they consider them together.” In addition to the standard reflection on how a person takes their faith onto the job site, *America* intriguingly asks its writers to describe ways “their work influenced their faith.” For example, did something at work cause a person to understand a particular church teaching? Or, maybe work allowed someone to see a “contemporary application of biblical truths.” *America* might also ask how work influences a person’s worship--as Fr. William Byron, SJ once told our National Center for the Laity: the offertory

procession begins on Monday morning and reaches the door of the church just in time for Saturday evening's Mass.

The series' first two contributors include Kerry Robinson (National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management, 1350 Connecticut Ave. NW #825, Washington, DC 20036) and William Baker (Fordham School of Education, 113 W. 60th St. #Lowenstein 1121, New York, NY 10023).

Robinson's job came through her reflection on her vocation: What can I do to improve the church in the wake of its scandalous mismanagement of wayward personnel? Now, with a team of experienced executives, she helps bishops, pastors and others implement best business practices.

For 20 years Baker was the chief executive officer for a television corporation in New York. He credits Catholic teaching on the equality of each person with his ability to forthrightly interview celebrities, civic leaders and business executives. He mentions one broadcast of an anti-Catholic protest. "As a Catholic I found [the group's tactics] abhorrent, [but] as a journalist I was morally obligated to bring [it] before the independent judgment of the public."

Language is often a difficulty in making a faith-work connection: faith jargon does not translate well in the marketplace. Yet for Baker "the spiritual vocabulary of the church has [allowed] me to see my work sacramentally, as an outward sign of an inward, if not grace, then purpose."

The NCL applauds *America* for this series. For its part, NCL continues to distribute titles in its *Spirituality of Work* series, each booklet specific to an occupation. Several titles sold out, but *Lawyers* and a small number of *Nurses* and *Homemakers* are available. NCL also distributes *Pope John Paul II's Gospel of Work* by Bill Droel, a theological foundation for the faith-work connection.

120 Years Of Catholic Social Thought

U.S. public policy is caught in a paradox: people want limited government, yet they want specific big-ticket government programs like Social Security, Medicare, student loans, farm assistance and more. Although this divide is portrayed as group against group, most people "have both deep conservative instincts

and liberal instincts," explain Michael Hais and Morley Winograd (New Policy Institute, 729 15th St. NW #200, Washington, DC 20005; www.newpolicyinstitute.org).

Interestingly, Hais and Winograd present research showing that the ideological divide between anti-government and pro-government is not appealing to young adults. They believe *both/and*, "in the efficiency of individual initiative at the local level to achieve national goals."

Thus there might be a positive way out of the current divide, one that is sensitive to young adults' simultaneous ideological conservatism and their pragmatic liberalism. Effective public leaders must synthesize "a strong desire to limit government's encroachment on individual liberty" with young adults' "belief in the importance of a strong national community and equality of opportunity," the researchers say. (*Christian Science Monitor* [1/31/11], 210 Massachusetts Ave, Boston, MA 02115)

With one crucial amendment, Hais and Winograd's *third way*, resonates with the Catholic principle of *subsidiarity*.

Accountability, freedom and participation are enhanced, subsidiarity says, when decisions are made as close as possible to those affected by the decisions. Government has a necessary role in society, but not everything governmental has to be delivered by a government entity.

Now here is how Catholicism differs from the Hais and Winograd suggestion: It does not put the emphasis on *individual* initiative at the local level, but on *group* responsibility. Catholicism celebrates mediating institutions like parishes, unions, professional associations, ethnic clubs, community organizations and more.

Rebuilding Our Institutions by Ernie Cortes and *Effective Organizing for Congregational Renewal* by Mike Gecan (National Center for the Laity, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$8.75 for both booklets) describe how the authors' Industrial Areas Foundation (637 S. Dearborn St. #100, Chicago, IL 60605; www.industrialareasfoundation.org) helps local institutions temper unaccountable bureaucracy while fostering responsible participation among those who benefit from government programs. For more on subsidiarity itself, get *Full-Time Christians* by Bill Droel (National Center for the Laity; \$8.25).

Happenings

“Faith, Justice and Civic Learning” is a June 16-17, 2011 conference at DePaul University (1 E. Jackson St., Chicago, IL 60604; agraves9@depaul.edu). Presentations will include members from several religions.

Interfaith Worker Justice (1020 W. Bryn Mawr Ave., Chicago, IL 60660; www.iwj.org) celebrates its 15th anniversary with a June 19-21, 2011 conference at DePaul University. There is a June 18, 2011 Theological Symposium in conjunction with the event. More details soon.

Pursuing the Path of Justice and Peace is a July 18-22, 2011 workshop at Villanova University for Augustinians and lay leaders. More information: Fr. Jack Deegan, OSA (Province of St. Thomas, PO Box 340, Villanova, PA 19085; jedeegan@comcast.net).

Cardijn Community International (58 Chinna Kulandai Main St., Maduma Nagar, Perambur Chennai 600011, India; www.cardijn.info) holds a General Assembly July 23-25, 2011 in Bangkok, Thailand.

The annual gathering and Poverty Summit for Catholic Charities (66 Canal Center Plaza #600, Alexandria, VA 22314; www.catholiccharitiesusa.org) is September 18-21, 2011 in Fort Worth.

Tyson Center for Faith and Spirituality (University of Arkansas College of Business, Fayetteville, AR 72701; <http://tfsu.uark.edu>) seeks nominations of companies “that have implemented specific policies, programs or practices that nurture faith and spirituality inside their organizations.” The Tyson Center holds an international conference November 7-9, 2011.

Vesper Society (115 Sansome St., San Francisco, CA 94104; www.kingdomofGodonline.com) has a team of presenters making the rounds in Chicago area parishes, congregations, and young-adult groups to discuss *A New Way of Seeing: Living Authentically in the Here-and-Now Kingdom of God* by Greg Pierce (Acta Publications, 4848 N. Clark St., Chicago, IL 60640; gfpierce@aol.com).

The Society intends to gather representatives from participating congregations before Thanksgiving 2011 for a broad discussion on the topic of faith in daily life.

Websites, Blogs and Resources

INITIATIVES recently reported on the 100 year anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, which launched major improvements in fire safety, workplace conditions and disability insurance. HBO (1100 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10036; www.hbo.com) has produced a documentary, *Triangle: Remembering the Fire*. Obtain other educational resources about the tragedy and its aftermath from Kheel Center (309 Ives Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853; www.cornell.edu/trianglefire).

Catholic Climate Covenant (PO Box 60205, Washington, DC 20039; www.catholicclimatecovenant.org) invites people to sign the St. Francis Pledge to care for creation and the poor. It also tracks public policy. For parishes and agencies that want to go green, the Covenant points to some grant possibilities.

Other resources to help parishes go green in their use of materials and energy include Faith in Motion (70 E. Lake St. #920, Chicago, IL 60601; www.faithinplace.org), the cybergroup Green Church Association (www.greenchurchassociation.org), and National Religious Partnership for the Environment (400 S. Pleasant St. #301, Amherst, MA 01002; www.nrpe.org). (*St. Anthony Messenger* [2/11], 28 W. Liberty St., Cincinnati, OH 45202)

Bob Senser, longtime friend of National Center for the Laity, edits an informative blog about global labor relations, Human Rights for Workers (<http://humanrightsforworkers.blogspot.com>).

A recent post describes Oneworld Alliance (www.oneworld.com), a consortium of 12 airlines, including American Airlines and British Airways. In a global economy, Senser says, workers from many areas have to act together. To that end, the International Transport Workers’ Federation (49-60 Borough

Rd., London, England SE1 1DR; www.itfglobal.org) meets this month in Washington to discuss relations with Oneworld. "Creating a One World Labor Council is also on the agenda," Senser reports.

To appreciate Senser's range of information and his wisdom, get *Justice at Work: Globalization and the Human Rights of Workers* (National Center for the Laity, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$12).

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Board Members of NCL include Tom Donnelly, Bill Droel, John Hazard, Phil Moore, Terry Mambu Rasch, Vince Rougeau, Lauren Sukal, Frosty Pipal and Vaile Scott (president).

NCL is a 501-C-3 organization, supported entirely by donations. If you have not yet made a 2011 contribution, please consider NCL—using the form on the back of this newsletter. Please too send reports from parish bulletins, diocesan papers, local papers, websites and more about aspects of the connection between faith and work.

"Some people say the dwindling number of religious is the work of the devil. But I would say this is God working among us... The religious life was started to keep alive the dangerous memory of Jesus... [But today] there is a huge disconnect between what is happening at the altar and the people standing around it... No one has ever found God in Church. You go to church on Sunday because you want to celebrate the God you have discovered during the week."

—Provincial Bro. Philip Pinto, CFC (Fratelli Cristiani, Via Marcantonio Colonna 9, Rome, Italy 00192) in *UCA News* (Soi Chinnakhet 1/45, Ngamwongwan Rd., Thungsonghong Laksi, Bangkok, Thailand 10210; www.ucanews.com; 1/5/11)