

Initiatives

In Support of Christians in the World

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Taking the Initiative

In the Liturgy

Liturgical expert Mark Searle (1941-1992) tried to write a book in his last days. His effort now appears as *Called To Participate* edited by Anne Koestner and Barbara Searle (Liturgical Press [2006], PO Box 7500, Collegeville, MN 56321; \$9.95).

Searle is not entirely pleased with what's happened since Vatican II. However, he hardly wants a return to the Latin Mass. The problem is that today's liturgy—even in the most sophisticated parishes—imbibes too much modern individualism. Even though worshippers “sing with one voice” and partake of a common loaf, the liturgy, like religion in general, is an exercise in privatization.

Many weddings, as every priest can attest, exemplify Searle's distress. The wedding reflects the groom and bride as individuals, but soars past “marriage as an institution and a tradition.”

Searle isn't faulting priests who accommodate stressed out brides and grooms. He is not criticizing dedicated liturgy coordinators and lay ministers. Nor, unlike the so-called *liturgical restorationists*, Searle is not at war with modernity.

The missing dimension, says Searle, is a vision of the liturgy as a public activity (*the work of the people in the public square*)—one that shapes the world. This vision, Searle details, was part of the liturgical movement from the late 1800s until Vatican II (1962-1965). It included people like Fr. Dom Virgil Michel, OSB (1890-1938) and National Center for the Laity founders Msgr. Dan Cantwell (1915-1996) and Ed Marciniak (1917-2004). This era is described briefly in *The People's Work* by Rev. Frank Senn (Augsburg Fortress [2006], PO Box 59304, Minneapolis, MN 55459; \$35) and extensively in *The Unread Vision: the Liturgical Movement in the U.S.* by Fr. Keith Pecklers, SJ (Liturgical Press [1998]; \$24.95).

Called To Participate is not bullet point liturgical techniques. In fact, says Searle, trying to “generate an awareness of the social

dimension of Christianity” by superimposing techniques will likely only yield more individualism. Instead, Searle suggests some alternative ways of thinking about a parish and its liturgy.

Echoing a National Center for the Laity theme, Searle says that most pastors and parish leaders currently regard “people at the core [of the parish] as normative and their mutual involvement [in intra-parish ministry] as a model for everyone else, which is neo-clericalism.” The liturgy and the world might change, he continues, if parish leaders “accepted that it is the people on the fringe who are normative; that is, the stranger, not the friend, who is the typical [Christian] *companion*.”

To overcome “religious individualism,” Searle concludes, we “need forms of worship that actually cultivate...the *liturgy of the world*.” INITIATIVES wants reports from its readers on this topic.

Taking the Initiative

With the Sacrament of Confirmation

Katelin Richter was confirmed at Immaculate Conception (PO Box 548, Watertown, MN 55388) last year. She was inspired that day but “didn't see how a 16-year old girl could possibly make even the slightest impact” on the world.

A few weeks later Richter went to a concert where she walked by a “Make Trade Fair” banner and table. More time elapsed. Richter eventually entered cyberspace at Oxfam America (26 West St., Boston, MA 02111; www.maketradefair.com). There she learned that “*free trade* is not [always] the same as *fair trade*.” More study followed. Now Richter drinks only fair trade coffee. She also tells schoolmates how to order “fair trade certified” candy through Catholic Relief Services (209 W. Fayette St., Baltimore, MD 21201; www.crs.org). (*Catholic Spirit*, 5/11/06)

Sometimes people are suddenly “slain in the Spirit” or have a dramatic “Damascus Road conversion.” The National Center for the Laity prefers young people like Richter in whom

the Spirit is moving steadily. She will be involved over the long haul.

By the way, other outlets for fair trade coffee include Dean's Beans (50 Moore Ave., Orange, MA 01364; www.deansbeans.com) and Peace Coffee (2801 21st Ave. S. #120, Minneapolis, MN 55407; www.peacecoffee.com). Equal Exchange (50 United Dr., West Bridgewater, MA 02379; www.equalexchange.com) sells candy, in addition to coffee and tea.

Taking the Initiative

On Vocations

"There isn't much of a substantive, spirit-filled conversation on vocations" in parishes, charges Gerry McCarthy in *The Social Edge* (<http://thesocialedge.com>; 6/06), a Canadian cyber-newsletter. Instead, most parishes obligatorily have an annual Vocation Sunday that exclusively centers on the priesthood and religious life. Consequently, Catholics are left to think about their work in the language of *wealth, status, competition, cost-benefit analysis* and the like.

Because *vocation* is usually equated with priesthood and religious life, writes Russell Shaw, *the vocation crisis* only refers to the relative shortfall in ordinations to the priesthood and professions to religious life. Yet if the whole church would promote the notion of *personal vocation*, Shaw continues, the relative shortage of priests and religious would take care of itself.

A personal vocation "is not the same as planning and organizing a career," notes Shaw. First comes prayerful discernment. Then, one's career and everything else falls within "the scope of one's personal vocation." (*Catholic Laity in the Mission of the Church*, Requiem Press [2006], PO Box 7, Bethune, SC 29009; \$14.95)

"I especially aimed to write something that would strike a discerning balance between personal fulfillment and social responsibility," says Chicagoan John Neafsey, author of *A Sacred Voice Is Calling: Personal Vocation and Social Conscience* (Orbis Books [2006], PO Box 302, Maryknoll, NY 10545; \$20) in an interview with Programs for the Theological Exploration of Education (2014 Broadway #372, Nashville, TN 37203; www.ptev.org).

For Neafsey, a personal vocation considers not only "what makes me happy" or "What am I good at," but also "what the world needs from us, what kind of contribution we

might be able to make for the betterment and redemption of this troubled world we live in."

Neafsey, a clinical psychologist and lecturer at Loyola University Chicago, is father of two adopted children from Guatemala. *A Sacred Voice Is Calling* contains spiritual insights from Catholicism and perspectives from other spiritual traditions, as well as from Neafsey's background in clinical psychology, and his interest in the Iraq War and other issues.

Neafsey outlines how to listen to one's inner voice with a variety of tools, including Biblical texts and insights inspired by saints and sages. The next step is translating one's calling into a way of life. Neafsey insists on a social conscience as part of this art of vocational discernment.

Frederick Buechner, author most recently of *Secrets in the Dark* (Harper Collins [2006], 10 E. 53rd St., New York, NY 10022; \$24.95), defines a personal vocation as the place "where our deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." *A Sacred Voice Is Calling* is a map to that place.

Taking the Initiative

With Canon Law

In principle Catholicism recognizes rights among its members, details Fr. Kevin McKenna in *A Concise Guide To Your Rights in the Catholic Church* (Ave Maria [2006], PO Box 482, Notre Dame, IN 46556; \$12.95). Several rights pertain to the sacraments and to decision-making in a parish or diocese. Others, however, extend to a Catholic's work life, including a moral right to decent wages and a right to form labor unions. There are many instances from around the world where the Catholic church defends workers rights.

Drawing upon *Code of Canon Law* (Canon Law Society of America [1983], Catholic University, Caldwell Hall #431, Washington, DC 20064; www.clsa.org), Vatican II and other sources, McKenna shows that these workplace rights cover those employed by the Church. Specifically, writes McKenna, the 1983 *Code* and *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches* name "the right to decent remuneration...suitable insurance, social security and health care" for Church employees.

Unfortunately, bishops and religious orders sometimes thwart these rights by hiring union-busting consultants, even though the bishops preach "that all Church institutions must

also fully recognize the rights of employees to organize and bargain collectively.” (*Economic Justice For All*, USCCB Publishing [1986], 3211 Fourth St. NE, Washington, DC 20017; \$9.95)

McKenna, a longtime friend of the National Center for the Laity, includes “obligations” in his very readable *Concise Guide*. For example, the baptized have “the obligation to promote social justice” in labor relations, “the arts, professions and a variety of political institutions.”

Of course, Catholic law (like any legal system) is effective only when it is honestly and clearly legislated, sufficiently promulgated, fairly and efficiently enforced and justly adjudicated. McKenna’s *Concise Guide To Your Rights* is one attempt to bring Catholic law off the dusty shelf and into the lives of parish staff and lay leaders.

The Association for the Rights of Catholics in the Church (3150 Newgate Dr., Florissant, MO 63033; www.arcc-catholic-rights.net), an advocacy group founded in 1980, supports Catholics whose rights are violated.

ARCC is aware that although we take *rights language* for granted, it was embraced only recently by the Church. So, says ARCC, we need models of “Catholics who exhibited heroic virtue in living their commitment to Jesus [in] the modern, critical-thinking, freedom-loving, democratic world.” ARCC is circulating a proclamation to canonize Bishop John Carroll, SJ (1735-1815) of Maryland and Bishop John England (1786-1842) of South Carolina.

Carroll, sensitive to the value of U.S. democracy, insisted that bishops be elected by their priests and approved by the pope. Carroll, the first U.S. bishop, was elected with only two negative votes—his own being one.

England, who was 34 when he became a U.S. bishop, regularly preached in Episcopal and Presbyterian churches. In an 1834 report to the Vatican, wrote that too many priests and some bishops are disrespectful of the educational attainment and democratic habits of U.S. Catholics. He challenged the Vatican “not to ruin [the U.S.] by pouring upon it a deluge of ignorance and folly.”

To advance the cause of sainthood for these two, send your name and e-mail address to canonization@arccsites.org.

Taking the Initiative In Law Schools

Catholic universities require courses in ethics; they afford volunteer opportunities to their students; and they promote Catholic social principles like the *common good* and the *preferential option for the poor* in a general way.

However, Catholic law schools (and presumably other graduate departments) should more explicitly connect justice to the Catholic faith, says Amelia Uelman (Institute on Religion, Law and Lawyers’ Work, 140 W. 62nd St. #125, New York, NY 10023). Religious diversity among the faculty and students is valuable. But, argues Uelman, too many lawyers, even in their day-to-day routine, “lack a robust intellectual framework which would help to challenge, or at least think about, how their work impacts the common good and the poor.”

It is not a matter of imposing a religion on students and faculty. It is rather explaining and probing Catholic philosophy and its relevance to daily work in order to offer future lawyers a guiding framework. Specifically, Uelman wants Catholic law schools to develop specialized seminars in “faith and justice.” Further, students must be deliberately introduced to lawyers who think about their faith and especially about concepts like *common good*, *solidarity*, and *option for the poor*. (*University of Detroit Mercy Law Review* [8/05], 651 E. Jefferson Ave., New York, NY 48226; <http://ssrn.com/abstract=779504>)

Taking the Initiative In Health Care

Here’s an idea for improving health care delivery: Wal-Mart (Bentonville, AK 72716; www.walmartstores.com) sells insurance in direct competition with Blue Cross, Aetna and others. Costs would plummet and everyone could be covered, presuming too that Wal-Mart employs thousands of doctors, nurses and technicians to staff a chain of cut-rate Wal-Mart pharmaceutical labs, hospitals and clinics—electronics in aisle five, phlebotomy in aisle six.

The only alternative is some type of national health care insurance. A way to garner support for national health care, suggests Joshua Green, is to get an endorsement from “the largest company in the history of the world,” from Wal-Mart.

That's the implicit idea behind Wal-Mart Watch (1730 M St. NW #601, Washington, DC 20036; www.walmartwatch.com), which peppers Wal-Mart in jujitsu fashion, Green explains in *Atlantic Monthly* (600 New Hampshire Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20037; 6/06). For example, the Watch campaigned for a recent Maryland law that requires Wal-Mart to spend 8% of its payroll on employee health care. Similar bills are pending in Rhode Island, California and elsewhere. Health care costs at Wal-Mart, which rose 19% in 2005, will get so prohibitive that the company endorses national health care, the jujitsu strategy predicts. (*N.Y. Times*, 2/24/06 and *U.S. Catholic* [5/06], 205 W. Monroe St., Chicago, IL 60606)

Andy Stern (Service Employees International Union, 1313 L St. NW, Washington, DC 20005; www.seiu.org), a leader of the Watch, explains: Our "goal is to get Wal-Mart's leadership out there in traffic and holler, 'We can no longer compete in the global economy when health care is factored into the cost of our products.'"

Employer-based health insurance, which came about during World War II, once made sense. But the sheer economics of health care is now forcing business to balance its "reflective opposition to government with enlightened self-interest," writes Green. Last February Wal-Mart CEO Lee Scott came close to endorsing some type of government plan by telling the National Governors' Association (444 N. Capitol St. #267, Washington, DC 20001; www.nga.org) that "the soaring cost of health care" cannot and should not be sustained "by any business."

By the way, INITIATIVES is not ruining Wal-Mart Watch's secret plan by reporting on it here. In a democracy tactics often work just as well when they are fully disclosed.

Books about Wal-Mart could become a small industry. Several are considered in *The New York Review of Books* (1755 Broadway #500, New York, NY 10019; 12/16/04) and *The Texas Observer* (307 W. Seventh St., Austin, TX 78701; 4/21/06), including: *The Bully of Bentonville: How the High Cost of Wal-Mart's Everyday Low Prices Is Hurting America* by Anthony Bianco (Doubleday [2006], 1745 Broadway, New York, NY 10019; \$24.95) and *The Wal-Mart Effect: How the World's Most Powerful Company Really Works* by Charles Fishman (Penguin Press [2006], 375 Hudson St., New York, NY 10014; \$25.95) and *Wal-Mart: Template for 21st Century Capitalism?* edited by

Nelson Lichtenstein (The New Press [2006], 38 Greene St. #400, New York, NY 10013; \$21.95).

Wal-Mart counters criticism through a cyber-group, Working Families for Wal-Mart (www.forwalmart.com).

Taking the Initiative Against Child Labor

About 15 years ago INITIATIVES, taking a cue from advocacy groups like Save the Children (54 Wilton Rd., Westport, CT 06880; www.savethechildren.net), asked its readers not to buy soccer balls unless they displayed a *no child labor* logo. A hundred other little newsletters did the same. Today the soccer ball industry, largely based in Pakistan, is childfree, reports the International Labor Organization (4 Route des Morillons, CH 1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland; www.ilo.org). The child labor situation has also improved in Brazil, Mexico and elsewhere. (*Chicago Tribune*, 5/5/06)

More needs to occur. For example, says International Initiative to End Child Labor (1016 S. Wayne St. #702, Arlington, VA 22204; www.endchildlabor.org), pressure is needed on the cocoa industry and other agricultural products.

An item in INITIATIVES or in another newsletter cannot alone stop exploitation. But—even in a complex global economy—a parish committee or a circle of friends can make a difference. High school and college groups in particular have made major contributions. There is plenty of material for students and teachers who want to get involved, including materials from Rethinking Schools (1001 E. Keefe Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53212; www.rethinkingschools.org) and up to date information from National Labor Committee (540 W. 48th St. #300, New York, NY 10036; www.nlcnet.org).

North American Spirituality

Sr. Mary Irene Fitzgibbon, SC (1823-1896)

The Catholic and Protestant approaches to charity differ, says sociologist Daniel Bell. The Catholic approach to "charity as *caritas*," as developed through the Middle Ages, "accepts the poor as worthy in themselves" and loves the poor without demeaning them. Somehow along the way, however, "classic Protestant liberalism—with its sympathy and humanitarianism, rather than love—corroded the social conscience of the

Catholic world.” (*The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, Basic Books [1973], 387 Park Ave. S., New York, NY 10016; \$21)

In the mid-1800s economic hardship in Europe, particularly the famine in Ireland, pushed immigrants into New York City. Sympathetic civic leaders responded to immigrant poverty with several programs and, over time, instituted the social work profession. Protestant thinking, writes Maureen Fitzgerald in *Habits of Compassion* (University of Illinois Press [2006], 1325 S. Oak St., Champaign, IL 61820; \$25), heavily influenced the anti-poverty measures. (Note: Not all proponents of the Protestant approach were Protestant; some were Catholic. And even today, as Bell implies, some Catholics embrace the Protestant approach.)

According to the Protestant approach in the 19th century, Fitzgerald details, “the moral failing of the poor [is] the primary cause of poverty’s growth.” Further, because immigrants lack self-sufficient qualities poor children should “be removed from the influence of [the Irish or Jewish] mother, community and religion” in order to thwart “the reproduction of a dependent class.” The Protestant response was called the *child saving movement* or the *placing out system*, and later *scientific charity*, and today *compassionate conservatism* or euphemistically, says Fitzgerald, *faith-based initiatives*.

By contrast, in the Catholic approach the lifestyle of the poor is “not the cause of poverty.” Further, the family--not the individual child--is the object of concern. Parents should never lose custody simply because of economics. The Catholic approach, Fitzgerald says, is less harsh and judgmental. It does not primarily try to reform the poor morally. Catholics give assistance without, for example, prying into a single-mother’s sex life.

Sr. Mary Irene Fitzgibbon and hundreds of other 19th century Irish-American nuns spent their careers resisting the Protestant response to poverty and in so doing influenced the way social services were delivered in our country through the 20th century; that is, until August 1996, when President Bill Clinton signed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act that once again put moralizing about the poor into the forefront. (See “The Worst Thing Bill Clinton Has Done” by Peter Edelman, *Atlantic Monthly*, 600 New Hampshire Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20037; 3/97.)

Fitzgibbon was a Sister of Charity (6301 Riverdale Ave., Bronx, NY 10471). In

1869 she and others started the Foundling Asylum in Manhattan’s Greenwich Village. Destitute women immediately began leaving their babies on Fitzgibbon’s doorstep. She cared for the children, always seeking to eventually reunite families. Fitzgibbon housed 1,800 infants and 600 women at a time at various locations.

By contrast, agencies using the Protestant approach put Irish and Jewish children on orphan trains, sending them to rural families in Michigan, Indiana and elsewhere. Between 1854 and 1929 about 175,000 *orphan train children* were permanently removed from New York and other Atlantic coast cities. (One estimate puts the number at 400,000.)

Habits of Compassion explains how Fitzgibbon, other nuns and other Catholic leaders got government funding for the orphanages and also by 1915 direct payments to poor mothers. Those closest to the needy, says the Catholic principle of subsidiarity, should deliver social services, with government playing a part.

The Catholic social imagination sees grace in the poor. This differs from “Protestant reformers’ strategies that focused on a top-down elevation of the poor morally,” writes Fitzgerald. The Protestant approach criticized the nuns for encouraging “dependence on public charities” instead of stigmatizing poverty and for not means-testing their people “to distinguish between worthy and unworthy poor.”

Fitzgibbon’s agency is still in business, now called The New York Foundling (590 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10011). A corner (not a whole block) outside Foundling is named in honor of Fitzgibbon. Yet, even though 20,000 people were in her funeral procession Fitzgibbon is largely forgotten. INITIATIVES hereby launches a campaign to include Fitzgibbon in the National Women’s Hall of Fame (76 Fall St., Seneca Falls, NY 13148; www.greatwomen.org). The Hall can place her next to its plaque of the founder of Fitzgibbon’s Daughters of Charity, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton (1774-1821).

INITIATIVES is pleased to mention other books that give due credit to pioneering women religious: *The Poor Belong To Us* by Dorothy Brown and Elizabeth McKeown (Harvard University Press [1997], 100 Maple Ridge Dr., Cumberland, RI 02864; \$12.95) and *Good Hearts: Catholic Sisters in Chicago’s Past* by Suellen Hoy (University of Illinois Press [2006], 1325 S. Oak St., Champaign, IL 61820; \$22).

Happenings

“Catholic Social Teaching and Human Work” is a September 25-27, 2006 conference at Villanova University (Mission Effectiveness, 202 Vasey Hall, Villanova, PA 19085; <http://www3.villanova.edu/mission>). It will commemorate the 25th anniversary of Pope John Paul II’s encyclical, *On Human Work*.

A book about John Paul’s theology of work by your INITIATIVES’ editor, Bill Droel, is forthcoming from Twenty-Third Publications. INITIATIVES’ readers will soon be offered a discount copy.

The John A. Ryan Institute (2115 Summit Ave. #55S, St. Paul, MN 55105; www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies) hosts “The Good Company: Catholic Social Thought and Corporate Social Responsibility,” October 5-7, 2006 in Rome, Italy.

The annual conference of Christians in Commerce (2853 Meadow View Rd., Falls Church, VA 22042; www.christiansincommerce.org) is October 20-21, 2006 in Phoenix. Regional CIC chapters sponsor Challenge Weekends, after which participants periodically meet for prayer and mutual support. CIC is ecumenical, including many Catholics.

Cardinal Renato Martino, president of the Pontifical Council on Justice and Peace, will talk on “The Relationship Between Justice and Love,” October 23, 2006 in St. Paul. More information: Center for Catholic Studies (2115 Summit Ave. #55S, St. Paul, MN 55105; www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies).

WEORC (1241 Anvil Ct., Addison, IL 60101; www.weorc.org), a support network for resigned priests, will host “Social Justice: Living the Legacy” on October 28, 2006 at DePaul University in Chicago.

The U.S. Catholic Bishops’ Department on Social Development and World Peace (3211 Fourth St. NE, Washington, DC 20017; www.usccb.org/sdwp) will host a “Catholic Social Ministry Gathering,” February 9-14, 2007 at a hotel on Capitol Hill.

The Coalition for Ministry in Daily Life (2015 NE Loop 410, San Antonio, TX 78217; www.dailylifeministry.org) holds its annual conference April 13-15, 2007 in Cleveland. Donate \$35 to CMDL and receive its newsletter, *Laynet*.

Websites

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Refugee Service (3211 Fourth St. NE, Washington, DC 20017; www.justiceforimmigrants.org) distributes a kit for parish leaders interested in immigration reform.

Justice Clothing (48 Main St., Bangor, ME 04401; www.justiceclothing.com) is a worker cooperative that distributes shirts, slacks and other apparel manufactured in unionized shops. The coop is owned by its workers, its volunteers and customers.

Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good (1308 19th St. NW, Washington, DC 20036; www.thecatholicalliance.org/new) is a cyber-organization that promotes “the fullness of Catholic teaching in the public square.” It provides updates on immigration reform, stem cell research and more.

Undergrads at any of the 28 Jesuit colleges in the U.S. can take an online course in poverty studies through Jesuit Distance Education Network (1 Dupont Cr. #405, Washington, DC 20036; www.ajcunet.edu). The course draws upon case studies and experiences of students in Jesuit colleges in Latin America.

Corporate Accountability International (46 Plympton St., Boston, MA 02118; www.stopcorporateabuse.org) is a leading force behind a global tobacco treaty that regulates how tobacco products are advertised and distributed. More than 120 countries have ratified the treaty, but not the U.S.

Bob Senser, longtime friend of the National Center for the Laity, monthly publishes an informative cyber-newsletter, *Human Rights for Workers* (www.senser.com).

Greg Pierce, former National Center for the Laity president, hosts a cyberspace “Dialogue on the Spirituality of Work.” To join the discussion, send your e-mail address to his secure site: gpierce@actapublications.com.

Fr. Sinclair Oubre (Catholic Labor Network, 1500 Jefferson Dr., Port Arthur, TX 77642; www.catholiclabor.org) keeps current with union and community issues, provides links to other interesting sites and, best of all, hosts the National Center for the Laity website (www.catholiclabor.org/NCL.htm).

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