

# Initiatives

In Support of Christians in the World

National Center for the Laity  
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## 50 Years since Vatican II

Our National Center for the Laity concludes its participation in Vatican II's (1962-1965) golden anniversary with a March 22-24, 2015 conference, "Joy and Hope," spearheaded by Center for Social Concerns (228 Geddes Hall, Notre Dame, IN 46556; [www.centerforsocialconcerns.nd.edu](http://www.centerforsocialconcerns.nd.edu)). This marks the third time NCL has assisted CSC. The previous conference had over 300 participants.

*Joy and Hope* (*Gaudium et Spes* in Latin) is another name for Vatican II's *Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*. The phrase is taken from its compelling opening paragraph: "The joys and hopes, the grief and anxieties of people today, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, the grief and anxieties of the followers of Christ."

Unlike today's *culture despisers*, *Church in the Modern World* praises recent accomplishments in research, economics, law and politics. It affirms the autonomy of science and the marvels of technology. And then, often by posing a question, *Church in the Modern World* delves into the modern paradox: "In the face of these immense efforts which already preoccupy the entire human race, people raise numerous questions among themselves: What is the meaning and value of this feverish activity? How should all these things be used? To what goal are the strivings of individuals and societies heading?"

People today, especially many young adults, are blessed with modern accomplishments yet wander in a teleological desert. We do not feel solid ground. And, says *Church in the Modern World*, because our understanding is usually "bound simply by appearances" we cannot sort out the mundane from the enduring. This is often the case in communications, relationships, product design and distribution, and all manner of culture. The coins in our pocket are now ethereal bitcoins. The solidity of our house rests on complicated, bundled, repackaged, lost-and-found, exported and uploaded, balloon and bust financial instruments. "All the efforts of technology,

however beneficial, cannot allay human anxiety," says *Church in the Modern World*. The modern "call to grandeur" often falls into "the depths of misery." The promise of freedom often becomes an array of unfulfilling choices.

God's revelation and the church's social doctrine can help the modern project, says *Church in the Modern World*. Vatican II does not scold. Rather it suggests "a conversation" between the church, which is the people of God, and all those sincerely interested in the modern predicament.

To read *Church in the Modern World*, get *Vatican II: the Essential Texts* (National Center for the Laity, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$15 limited supply).

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## Taking the Initiative

### *On Beetles and Hogs*

Catholicism is interested in an economic order that is not overly dominated by government meddling, but also one that stays clear of an individualistic, wide-open marketplace. Catholic thinkers in the past, including Fr. Heinrich Pesch, SJ (1854-1926), Pope Pius XI (1857-1939), Fr. Oswald Von Nell-Breuning, SJ (1890-1991) and others, outlined an *occupational order*; that is, a plan for vibrant partnerships among wage-earners, managers, investors, customers and stakeholders. It was alternatively called *solidarism*, *co-determinism*, *corporatism* (in French), and *the industry council plan* (in the U.S.).

The plan does not do away with labor contracts; in fact, it is healthy for unions. Nor does the plan violate property rights. It relieves government "of tasks that are none of its business," writes Von Nell-Breuning. It enhances participation in economic direction—with all parties "contributing to the common good." (*Moral Theology No. 5* edited by Fr. Charles Curran & Fr. Richard McCormick, SJ, Paulist Press [1986], 997 Macarthur Blvd., Mahwah, NJ 07430)

Obviously, says Pesch, a plan alone does not "eliminate all practical difficulties." But this vision with its "idea of vocation, of ideal

dedication [and] service in the interests of the community” will stimulate all workers (executives and wage-earners) “to a greater interest in the success of the enterprise and strengthen the sense of responsibility and joy in their work.” (“Christian Solidarism” in *Church and Society* edited by Joseph Moody, Arts Inc. [1953])

Tom Geoghegan says the phrase *works council*, as used in Germany, is derived from Catholicism’s industry council plan. “What makes *German capitalism* so different is that there is this whiff of Catholicism,” Geoghegan writes. The works council model is spreading, even amid the current austerity measures in Germany, he reports. (*Were You Born on the Wrong Continent?*, National Center for the Laity, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$12)

CEO Frank Fischer (Volkswagen Assembly, 7351 VW Dr., Chattanooga, TN 37416) says that his company is committed to “establishing a *works council* in accordance with the requirements of U.S. labor law, to meet VW America’s production needs and serve our employees’ interest.” He made this comment minutes after learning that a vote for a United Auto Workers union (151 Maddox-Simpson Pkwy., Lebanon, TN 37090) at his plant was defeated 712 to 626. VW was officially neutral during the campaign and in fact Fischer denied some anti-union statements made by local politicians and a U.S. senator. The company’s calm behavior during the campaign was based on its assumption that in the U.S. a labor union is a legal prerequisite to a *works council*. (*N.Y. Times*, 2/17/14 & *Chicago Tribune* 2/18/14 & *Wall St. Journal*, 2/23/14)

Meanwhile, NPR reporter Adam Davidson draws a parallel between the “powerful work councils” in Germany and the situation at Harley-Davidson Manufacturing (1425 Eden Rd., York, PA 17402).

The current recession brought Harley “close to collapse,” but the York management did not respond in typical manner: That is, “by breaking their unions, by moving to a Southern right-to-work state or out of the country altogether, and by employing robots.” For the record: the company did talk about moving to Kentucky and the union agreed to some layoffs and a pay freeze. But negotiations with International Association of Machinists (3200 E. Prospect Rd., York, PA 17402) and with United Steel Workers (80 Revere Rd., York, PA 17402) stressed efficient employee involvement. Management believes that skilled workers who

care about the business are more likely to handle the 1,200 bike configurations at the plant than robots.

German manufacturing is doing well, Davidson concludes, because its work councils force manufacturers to “treat workers well,” who in turn care about the company. (*N.Y. Times Magazine*, 2/2/14)

## **Taking the Initiative In Health Care**

The U.S. itemized fee-for-service model of health care within our individual rights-happy and death-denying culture guarantees expensive care. Doctors order all manner of tests and procedures just in case. Patients, who pay only part of the cost, want whatever is available.

A recent trend offers potential for improvement. Mostly primary care doctors, but also some specialists, are opting out of their small business in favor of a hospital salary. “Today about 60% of family doctors and pediatricians, 50% of surgeons and 25% of surgical subspecialists...are employees rather than independent,” reports Elisabeth Rosenthal. Among the advantages, salaried doctors “no longer [have] to worry about paying malpractice premiums themselves or finding health insurance for their staff.” Plus they can spend more time with each patient.

Unfortunately, the short-term result might be higher costs. Hospitals (both for-profit and non-profit) want to increase revenue and minimize patient complaint. Thus they too encourage expensive procedures. Some still reward doctors for each procedure, Rosenthal found. On the other hand, some hospital systems are beginning to “reward doctors for delivering high quality and cost effective care.” And, some innovative insurance plans scale reimbursements with those criteria in mind. (*N.Y. Times*, 2/13/14)

Bob Master and Rushika Ferandopulle abandon fee-for-service and clear other obstacles to make “patients and their needs the central focus,” writes Michael Jonas. They believe that “the thing most needed in U.S. health care is not more treatments or more money, but greater connection between patients and health care providers.”

Master founded the non-profit Commonwealth Care Alliance (148 State St. #1000, Boston, MA 02109). It now has about 5,000 patients served through 25 clinics. It welcomes people who have multiple illnesses,

including mental health problems. Master got experimental waivers from government entities. Based on a patient's profile, CCA gets a single payment; it does not submit individual tests and procedures for reimbursement. CCA spends its money on home aides, house calls, even perhaps arranging a ride to church to combat a patient's social isolation. This low-tech approach has decreased hospital days by about half. The cost per patient is about 60% less than that spent on similar Medicaid patients.

Ferandopulle founded the for-profit Iora Health (222 Third St. #3100, Cambridge, MA 02142) about seven years ago. It now has over 5,000 patients in four practices. Like with CCA, Iora gets a fixed payment, not fee-for-service. However, its revenue comes from employers or unions that want an alternative to standard insurance. In some of its arrangements Iora, in a switch from other plans, restricts its patients to workers with pre-existing or serious conditions. Even so, emergency room use dropped by 50%, hospital visits by 41% and overall spending by about 15%." (*Commonwealth* [Winter/14], 11 Beacon St. #500, Boston, MA 02108)

Please send reports to INITIATIVES about other innovative doctors.

### **Taking the Initiative** *In Business*

Business leaders object to government meddling. Unfortunately, some then go to an opposite extreme: claiming that government has no role in an unregulated free market. But maybe the way to less government is for business itself, especially through trade associations, to adopt reforms. (See *What Is Social Justice?*, National Center for the Laity, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$5)

GAP (2 Folsom St., San Francisco, CA 94105), which also includes Old Navy and Banana Republic, says its minimum wage is too low and will thus increase to \$9, and \$10 in 2015. GAP wants to retain employees, particularly as it introduces new customer services. GAP also takes note of studies that link better pay with increased productivity. GAP's new wage is shy of the suggested \$10.10 and many clerks have trouble getting assigned 30-40 hours per week on the job. Keep in mind though that all social justice is incremental and that GAP may be setting a trend. (*N.Y. Times*, 2/20/14)

Over 300 businesses, including Walgreen's, Boeing, Apple and Ford, signed a pledge that their hiring practice is not weighted against the longer-term unemployed. Currently, about four million have been out of work for more than 27 weeks, with about half of those more than a year.

The "Best Practices for Recruiting and Hiring Pledge" was engineered by President Barack Obama (White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20500; [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)). It welcomes more signatories. (*Chicago Tribune*, 2/1/14)

Critics say the pledge "is meaningless." Obviously, the companies get some PR and yet the pledge is hard to police. But would it be more enforceable as a federal mandate rather than a government prompting?

### **Taking the Initiative** *On Food*

INITIATIVES recently visited Florida. The local papers reported that Wal-Mart (702 SW Eighth St., Bentonville, AR 72716) increases its payment to tomato pickers by one cent per pound; from about 50 cents per 32-pound bucket to 82 cents; from about \$10,000 annual pay to about \$16,500. If INITIATIVES' high school-math is correct, the work load is over 10 buckets per hour.

Wal-Mart signed the Coalition of Immokalee Worker's Fair Food Pledge (PO Box 603, Immokalee, FL 34143; [www.ciw-online.org](http://www.ciw-online.org)) without pickets or marches by CIW. This Food Pledge is monitored by the independent Fair Food Standards Council (330 S. Pineapple Ave. #201, Sarasota, FL 34236; [www.fairfoodstandards.org](http://www.fairfoodstandards.org)). A grower must have a "Participating Grower" certificate without which it cannot sell to Wal-Mart or others in the program including McDonald's, Chipotle, Yum Brands and a few more. Wal-Mart added an incentive: It will give longer-term purchase contracts to faithful "Participating Growers." (*Tampa Bay Tribune*, 1/20/14 & *Fort Meyers News-Press*, 1/20/14)

Meanwhile, diners looking to eat where "your server can afford to pay their rent and your cook does not have to work while sick" can tap their free ROC National Diners app. Restaurant Opportunities Centers (275 Seventh Ave. #1703, New York, NY 10001; [www.rocunited.org](http://www.rocunited.org)) rates restaurants on their labor standards. (*In These*

*Times* [2/14], 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647)

## **Taking the Initiative**

### *Making Saints*

Archbishop Andre Joseph Leonard (Chancery, Wollemarkt 15, B-2800 Mechelen, Belgium) has formally begun saint-making for Fr. (later cardinal) Joseph Leo Cardijn (1882-1967). The Cardijn Community (73C Evangelista St., Santolan Pasig City 1610, Metro Manila, Philippines; [www.cardijncommunity.org](http://www.cardijncommunity.org)) is assisting the process. And, in timely fashion, Frank Ardito, Jr. in the just published *The YCW I Remember: A Pre-Vatican II Movement of the Specialized Lay Apostolate* (National Center for the Laity, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$9) gives an account of Cardijn's influence in the U.S.

Cardijn devoted his ministry to young adults with a premise different from those who desire to *bring people to Christianity* by way of worthwhile social events, vibrant liturgy, service projects and more. Instead, Cardijn sought to *bring Christianity* to young workers and to form them in small communities.

Instead of doing youth and young adult ministry *for* young people, Cardijn developed a youth ministry done *by youth* with an emphasis on their own formation—what he called *a school of life*.

Instead of measuring success by the eventual involvement of the young people in parish life, Cardijn wanted Catholicism to be meaningful in real life settings of young people working in shops, of young soldiers, sailors, and of factory workers. Beginning in 1912 Cardijn formed ten small occupational groups of girls—soon expanded to boys and eventually to young men and young women in many countries.

Some objected that these young adult groups did not fit into a diocesan flow chart; that pastoral attention to the workweek was a distraction from parish-centered activities (which were on the flow chart). Further, Cardijn's critics wanted official Church leaders to influence individual elite leaders, not social improvement from the ground up. Cardijn's movement, they also said, was too radical; it played into the hands of the communists. Finally, some criticized his groups for emphasizing social action at the expense of spiritual development.

The groups, Cardijn countered, were an alternative to what Catholic young adults found

attractive in communism. His famous Inquiry Method (*observe-judge-act*) and his insistence that the best apostles are those closest to the scene drew upon insights of communists.

The Cardijn groups were not negative about parish life, but addressed concerns which parishes could not. And, Cardijn constantly integrated daily work with the spiritual life, particularly the liturgy. As he said: "Without work there is no altar bread, no wine, no paten, no altar, no church, no religion."

In 1925 Pope Pius XI (1857-1939) endorsed Cardijn's Catholic Action movement, which by then had divisions like Working Christian Youth (also known as Young Christian Workers) and Young Christian Students, each with many cells. Eventually, Vatican II in its *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity* "earnestly endorse[d]" the movement.

The Catholic Action movement came to the U.S. in the late 1930s through the efforts of Fr. Louis Putz, CSC (1909-1998) of the University of Notre Dame, who uniquely had direct exposure to the Cardijn movement. Other importers include Fr. Donald Kanaly (1925-2005) of Ponca City, OK, Msgr. Reynold Hillenbrand (1904-1979) of Chicago's major seminary and Dominic Paul Maguire (1903-1978), an Australian lay leader who, sponsored by the Knights of Columbus, toured the U.S.

In his memoir Ardito describes how in 1955, following his U.S. Army service, he got involved in a parish-based young adult group. Eventually, he was tapped to be a leader in YCW. The YCW meetings were different, he explains: You had to bring facts about a particular topic to the meeting and it required "that you actually take action on your facts. It was not an idle discussion club."

Ardito mentions several accomplishments. His report is quite genuine because he also includes missteps and unintended outcomes. One member of his group, for example, wanted the facts about communism so she boldly called their office. Later, on her way to work, two FBI agents stopped her—assuming that she was sympathetic rather than anti-communist. Without dwelling on negatives, Ardito also experienced the criticism suffered by Cardijn—as when the pastor of his parish told the YCW group to leave or when a bishop in California would not let him begin a new group. Like critics of Cardijn, some U.S. seminarians assumed YCW was a distraction to the spiritual life and thus were surprised when Ardito told

them “that we attended Mass every morning, said the rosary, and practiced mental prayer.”

The Cardijn movement is gone in the U.S., though it is active in Asia, somewhat in Western Europe and elsewhere. Some of its features are perhaps outmoded. Yet in INITIATIVES’ opinion its basic method is a practical way to put wheels on Pope Francis’ exhortation to mission.

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## Work and Art

Angela Alaimo O’Donnell joins a chorus to assert that an era “when Catholic novels explor[ed] deep questions of faith...is dead.” With exceptions, that type of book is not published because it seemingly doesn’t relate to our secular culture. (*America* [1/27/14], 106 W. 56<sup>th</sup> St., New York, NY 10019)

Paul Elie also says “the novel of belief” is a thing of the past. Yes, stories might include “belief as upbringing, belief as social fact, [or] belief as a species of American weirdness... All that is missing is the believer.” (*N.Y. Times*, 12/19/12)

The Catholic absence goes further, says Dana Gioia. “Although Roman Catholicism is the largest religious and cultural group in the U.S., Catholicism currently enjoys almost no positive presence in the American fine arts... This disappearance has occurred during a period when celebrating cultural diversity [is] an explicit goal” across the U.S. Yes, Catholic literary culture in our country “may still have a modicum of local color amid [our faith’s] crumbling infrastructure,” but leaders in the arts are uninterested. (*First Things* [12/13], 35 E. 21<sup>st</sup> St., New York, NY 10010)

Catholic imaginative literature, says Gioia, touches upon religious themes (suffering, sin, grace) within a particular world view. For Catholics that means that people are capable of sin, but the world is not evil. It is sacramental—God hidden and revealed in the ordinary. The Catholic imagination takes the long view, allowing for gradual redemption. A good Catholic story is rarely pious. Simply placing some religious artifacts or a priest within a story does not make it religious. As Jacques Maritain (1882-1973) said: God does not ask for explicitly *religious* art or *Catholic* art. The art God wants is art with all its teeth.

Maybe things are not so bad, writes Gregory Wolfe. He can name 17 U.S. novelists (including a few mystery and sci-fi writers)

whose books have a Catholic sensibility. Plus he adds a handful of worthy Catholic memoir writers. The problem, he thinks, is that “ideological blinders have prevented religious and secular people alike from perceiving the work that is out there.” The neglect of Catholic imagination as expressed in the arts is, says Wolfe, part of the “steady shrinking of cultural and aesthetic concerns to ideological politics, including church politics.” (*Image* [Fall/13], 3307 Third Ave. W., Seattle, WA 98119)

Any recommendations from INITIATIVES’ readers?

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## 120+ Years

### *Of Catholic Social Thought*

Catholic social thought is the result of 2,000 years of reflection on many societies, guided by revelation and reason. It rolls out general, complementary principles.

Catholic laity, in consort with like-minded people, are responsible inside their own institutions for prudently translating these principles into specific, admittedly imperfect, policies. Lay people count on bishops and their employees to constantly preach our social doctrine, no matter how unpopular. Bishops and other Church employees who speak too specifically, however, about a partisan social or economic policy or about a complex procedure internal to a business risk discouraging the laity from implementing improvements.

So what does Catholic social thought say about, for example, poverty? Is a higher tax rate on the wealthy good in order to have government funding of pre-K education or is a lower tax rate for business better in order to create jobs? To what degree does government assistance like unemployment insurance, food stamps or a housing subsidy mitigate poverty? Enough case studies show that increasing the national minimum wage, let’s say to \$10.10, does not harm business and helps some workers, but what about an increase to \$15? And does an increase in the minimum wage actually address income inequality? How precisely is income inequality connected to creating poverty?

The bedrock Catholic principle is *innate human dignity*. Therefore Catholicism makes no distinction between the *undeserving poor* and the *deserving poor* nor does it, like President Barack Obama, use the phrase “the poor who play by the rules.” Nor, for that matter, does Catholicism say that there are *deserving rich people*, as if anyone

prospers by self-achievement rather than by God's original gift and the benefits of society. Everyone is obliged to contribute to society; anyone's deliberate sloth is wrong. But so too are parallel-society trends like *concierge medicine*.

This principle about *innate human dignity* means there is no romanticism about regard for the poor; they sin like everyone. Simply that eliminating or at least alleviating poverty is a Christian expectation.

*Marriage* is a Catholic *social* principle. Catholic reflection concludes that families inside the institution of marriage are healthier and children in a marriage-household do better academically and eventually economically. This principle is paired with the Catholic principle of a *family wage*.

At the same time the principle of an *organic society* cautions against reducing social policy to singular cause-and-effect variables. Ari Fleischer, for example, overreaches in saying that single parenthood "is a major cause of modern poverty" and that somehow enticing the poor to marry will solve the poverty question. His critics are equally off the mark to say that poverty causes single motherhood or, like Rep. Rosa DeLauro, to simplistically dismiss the marriage factor as not "productive or relevant to the [poverty] discussion." (*Wall St. Journal*, 1/13/14 & 1/23/14)

*Subsidiarity* says that to respect freedom and to be effective the remedy to poverty should be delivered as close as possible to those affected by it. Thus, whatever its merits, Catholicism could fault the Health Care Reform Act for perpetuating the gap between solitary individuals and bureaucracies. Signing up for the plans, for example, is a frustrating computer task for an individual. What if the sign-up was mediated in parish halls, neighborhood clinics and the like?

Now, the *subsidiarity* principle cannot be isolated (as in a national candidate's recent campaign) from the other principles to imply that government has no role. The principles of *solidarity* and *the common good* say that government has a crucial role in addressing social problems.

To be continued...

## North American Spirituality

Ann Harrigan Makletzoff (1910-1984)

Ellen Tarry (1906-2008)

Harrigan at age 32 and Tarry at age 36 came to Chicago from New York in 1942 at the invitation of Bishop Bernard Sheil (1888-1969) to found Friendship House ([www.friendshiphouse.org](http://www.friendshiphouse.org)). Catherine de Hueck Doherty (1896-1985), profiled in another issue of INITIATIVES, founded the FH movement, a Catholic interracial apostolate, in Toronto during early 1930s. She too was involved with the Chicago house; the longest serving of the houses. Msgr. Dan Cantwell (1915-1996), a founder of our National Center for the Laity, was a longtime chaplain of FH.

On one hand, FH goals were naïve. As Harrigan later reflected: "How simple the solution all seemed then: the sooner we of different races learned to work together, to pray together, to eat, to study, to laugh together, the sooner we'd be on the way to interracial justice." And yet, as Karen Joy Johnson explains, FH was successful, more so than evangelical race relations efforts in those years, even though blacks were more likely to be evangelical Protestant than Catholic. The Catholic "success was due, in large part, to the origins of their theology." ("Healing the Mystical Body" in *Christians and the Color Line* edited by J. Russell Hawkins and Phillip Sinitiere, Oxford University Press [2014], 198 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016; \$29.95)

Animated by the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ, FH brought an institutional analysis to the race issue. First comes public friendship, but then actions to integrate public institutions. Kindness isn't enough. People need "an opportunity to help themselves instead of an angel of mercy to dole out food and clothing," Tarry says.

Tarry, originally from Birmingham, was a teacher in New York and a journalist for *Amsterdam News*. She sacrificed those careers to found Chicago's FH. She returned to New York after a short time and became a social worker and administrator, including positions with Catholic Community Service and U.S. Dept. of HUD. She participated in the 1963 March on Washington and the 1965 Selma to Montgomery March. Tarry continued writing, including children's books and three biographies of saints. Her autobiography is *The Third Door*

(University of Alabama Press [1955], PO Box 870380, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487; \$32.95).

Harrigan directed Chicago FH for its first six years. She then married and moved to Canada, staying involved with de Hueck Doherty's movement. Her papers are at University of Notre Dame.

For the record, Cantwell's papers are at Chicago History Museum (1601 N. Clark St., Chicago, IL 60614).

Chicago FH closed in 2000. Through its years, many young adults including seminarians and women religious were exposed to social Catholicism, particularly on race relations. Former NCL board member Al Schorsch III gave FH plenty of energy in its final years and he now maintains its website.

## **Happenings**

The Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership (770 Pawtucket Dr., Westfield, IN 46074; [www.greenleaf.org](http://www.greenleaf.org)) holds its annual conference in Atlanta, September 24-26, 2014.

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