

Initiatives

In Support of Christians in
the World

National Center for the Laity
PO Box 291102
Chicago, IL 60629
www.catholiclabor.org/NCL.htm

December 2010

Number
190

50 Years since Vatican II

Some Catholic circles, of late, espouse a so-called *pure Christianity* or a *remnant theology*. Catholicism, albeit with fewer members, is better off untainted by any compromise with the wider culture, these people propose.

Our National Center for the Laity rejects such defensiveness and sectarianism. NCL exists to promote Vatican II (1962-1965), specifically its teaching that the church is the people of God in service to the modern world. Yes, there is evil in the world. Yes, some behavior is objectively sinful. But most Catholics—those who constantly participate in morally ambiguous institutions like companies, schools, brokerage firms, political parties, unions and churches—believe that people are basically good and that God's kingdom is revealed (though also concealed) in normal daily life.

INITIATIVES, NCL's newsletter, does not overlook defects in institutions and in culture. But unlike the *culture despisers*, NCL starts with achievements and then calls the world to live up to its best aspirations.

Church employees need to accompany, support and critique ordinary workaday Christians, but not moralize about business, advertising, partisan politics, entertainment, foreign policy or other matters outside their scope. Lay people (Church employees and volunteers) need to fully participate in liturgy, to competently teach the faith to students, to bring the Eucharist to the ill, and to do all this in fidelity to their baptism, but not because of a relative shortage of clergy.

NCL's analysis of the post-Vatican II church sees much time, energy and money given to internal Church matters. Meanwhile, the vital mission of the whole church to the world is given scant attention.

NCL does not claim a monopoly on the entire Christian story. But, as others deal with other topics, NCL--with prayerful and financial support from many donors--remains fixated on pointing the whole church toward its worldly mission.

--Attention Readers--

The National Center for the Laity's Advent 2010 fundraising appeal is in the mail.

We hope your generous response will collectively yield \$35,000 so that NCL can publish through December 2011 and implement its programs without major worry.

Thanks to those donors who have supported NCL over the past 33 years.

Taking the Initiative *Against Poverty*

The U.S. poverty rate is the highest in 15 years, says the Census Bureau (4600 Silver Hill Rd., Washington, DC 20233; www.census.gov). That's 43.6 million people or 14.3% of the population who earn less than approximately \$11,000 or \$22,000 for a family of four. The increase of about four million people in recent months is attributed to underemployed workers or to downsized middle-class workers. Experts like Timothy Smeeding (Institute for Research on Poverty, 1180 Observatory Dr. #SSB 3412, Madison, WI 53706; www.irp.wisc.edu) predict a further rise in poverty, particularly among young adults lacking a college education and among children. (*N.Y. Times*, 9/17/10 & *Chicago Tribune*, 9/17/10)

In this context Catholic Charities USA (66 Canal Center Plaza #600, Alexandria, VA 22314; www.catholiccharitiesusa.org) concludes its 100-year anniversary. During its recent Centennial Gathering its leaders and supporters rededicated themselves to the poor. They then boarded chartered buses for Capitol Hill. In addition to its direct service in the nation's cities and towns, Catholic Charities is lobbying for more responsive delivery of governmental programs. Specifically, Catholic Charities wants a National Opportunity and Community Renewal Act (S3845 & HR6222) that will update eligibility criteria for aid and will install a more flexible, tailored and holistic approach to assisting the least advantaged.

Dennis Walczyk (Catholic Charities, 741 Delaware Ave., Buffalo, NY 14209),

longtime friend of the National Center for the Laity, and his team have a difficult assignment. Buffalo, reports George Marlin, “is now a city of darkness and despair.” Its poverty rate is 29%, compared to the national 14%. It has the highest foreclosure rate in the state on single family homes and municipal finances are in disarray. (*N.Y. Post*, 10/3/10)

Walczyk was at the Centennial Gathering. He energetically buttonholed three Congressional staffers and a Congresswoman, telling them success stories of how with appropriate private and public assistance specific people became self-sufficient. (*National Catholic Reporter* [10/1/10 & 10/15/10], PO Box 411009, Kansas City, MO 64141 & *NCR Online*, www.ncronline.org; 9/29/10 & *The Catholic Spirit*, 10/7/10)

U.S. Catholics, of course, have practiced charity since 1776, but in 1910 a national organization emerged to coordinate “projects sponsored by parishes, dioceses, religious communities, dedicated lay men and women, amateurs and a growing number of professionals,” explains David O’Brien in *100 Years at the Intersection of Charity and Justice* edited by Fr. J. Bryan Hehir (Liturgical Press [2010], PO Box 7500, Collegeville, MN 56321; \$19.95).

O’Brien and other contributors to this anniversary book explain the multiple goals of Catholic Charities: 1) direct aid to the unemployed, the ill, the elderly, special families and more; 2) lobbying to mitigate the causes of poverty; 3) providing research and focus to bishops, pastors and lay leaders regarding social reform; 4) educating Catholics and the public on Catholic social thought. The authors also detail constant tensions in Catholic Charities’ agenda: 1) providing professional and coordinated social work without discouraging local parish efforts; 2) compassionately delivering governmental resources without losing the Catholic touch amid bureaucracy; 3) joining coalitions without compromising Catholic doctrine; 4) responding to overwhelming immediate needs while simultaneously moving upstream with justice strategies.

Fr. Larry Snyder, current Catholic Charities USA president, outlines current challenges in *Think and Act Anew* (Orbis Books [2010], PO Box 301, Maryknoll, NY 10545; \$16).

Blessings for another 100 years to all Catholic Charities’ dedicated staff, volunteers and donors.

Taking the Initiative *In the Warehouse*

It is a managerial achievement to abundantly stock stores like Wal-Mart, Target, Home Depot and the like and to display goods at relatively affordable prices. Weekend consumers, however, need to be aware of the hidden price behind the price tag.

Inexpensive goods get to Wal-Mart shelves by way of large, outlying distribution centers, where overseas products are sorted and put on trucks. Now, the complicated part of the story: Wal-Mart might own the entire process. Or, commercial realtors own the warehouses or shipping docks and lease them to operating companies that, in turn, hire day laborers. (*Getting the Goods: Ports, Labor and the Logistics Revolution* by Edna Bonacich & Jake Wilson, Cornell University Press [2008], 512 E. State St, Ithaca, NY 14850; \$23.95)

The workers, says James Wolfinger (DePaul University, 1 E. Jackson St. #SAC 338, Chicago, IL 60604), are in a sense “independent contractors with no room to move forward, no pay raises, no benefits.” In fact, a new term, *permatemp*, is used to describe the way these warehouse workers are shuffled in and out at will. The warehouse industry is among the few that are hiring blue collar workers. But their treatment and wages are not favorably comparable to old-fashioned blue collar jobs in mills, manufacturing plants and the like. (*N.Y. Times*, 8/27/10)

Warehouse Workers for Justice (37 S. Ashland Ave., Chicago, IL 60607; www.warehouseworker.org) is “the truest labor cause I’ve observed in quite awhile,” says Thomas Garlitz (Diocese of Joliet, 101 W. Airport Rd., Romeoville, IL 60446; www.paxjoliet.org).

Although roundabout and difficult, WWJ is forming groups of warehouse workers to bargain for better treatment, new management policies and legislation. WWJ is supported by one Catholic parish and several evangelical congregations.

The church first gives pastoral care and social service to the workers. Then, Garlitz explains, it lobbies for an intermodal facility requirement to hire a certain percentage of direct employees, while allowing for some temporary workers. There could also be better directives and enforcement of a living wage.

Garlitz is impressed that although the Electrical Workers Union initially promoted WWJ, it is becoming independent. If a union is

formed, it will probably not be affiliated with EWU.

Warehouse Workers United (1900 L St. NW #900, Washington, DC 20036; www.warehouseworkersunited.org) and other worker centers are likewise dealing with the plight of permatemp warehouse workers.

Taking the Initiatives *Against Slavery*

About 16,000 slaves are brought into or trafficked to the U.S. each year, write Kevin Bales and Ron Soodalter in *The Slave Next Door* (University of California Press [2009], 1445 Lower Ferry Rd., Ewing, NJ 08618; \$24.95). A U.S. slave serves about five years and then is abandoned. There are a total of perhaps 50,000 slaves in our country at any one time. Unlike before the Civil War, these slaves are invisible, even though they are “next door.” Literally next door, say Bales and Soodalter, because about 25% of the slaves are nannies or other household servants in the homes of otherwise respectable people. An executive or a professional, who can well afford a paid worker, arranges for a slave to enter the U.S. with one or another visa classification pertaining to household help. Documents are then confiscated, threats are made, and the term of slavery begins.

The authors devote a chapter to each job category. The next largest group is in the sex industry, sadly including many children. While all prostitution is slavery, this category does not include so-called *consensual sex* in which the adult prostitute is paid. It does, however, not only include those trafficked from overseas but also teenagers who are kidnapped from U.S. malls, detention or rehab facilities and more.

Other slave categories include migrant farming, sweatshops and construction.

The Slave Next Door concludes with over 25 action suggestions for concerned individuals and groups. There is also an annotated appendix featuring over 35 anti-slavery public and non-profit organizations.

It is convenient to call the slaveholders *moral monsters* and be done with it. But Bales and Soodalter note that slavery is involved in every normal day. “Rugs are hand woven by slaves in the carpet belt of India, Pakistan and Nepal. Cotton is grown with slave labor...Coffee cultivation also encompasses slave labor, mainly in Africa...Chocolate can also be the product of slavery from the cocoa farms of the Ivory Coast.”

Taking the Initiative *In Liturgy*

The liturgy transforms its participants so they can make institutions more harmonious with human dignity. This notion is explained in two new, four-page, downloadable handouts, *Eucharist: Body of Christ Broken for the World* and *Eucharistic Liturgy: Formed, Transformed and Sent* (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 3211 Fourth St. NE, Washington, DC 20017; www.usccb.org/campus/documents/2010-campus-litury.pdf).

“The relationship between liturgical celebration and the practice of justice is [one of] the most significant topics calling for [the church’s] attention today,” writes Msgr. Jack Egan (1916-2001). “If there is any dimension of the liturgy which promises to [improve] our practice and transform our identity as celebrating people, it is this connection to justice.” (*Church, Chicago Style* by Bill Droel, National Center for the Laity, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$8.25)

Unfortunately, “liturgical reform and the development of the social doctrine of the church seem to have moved forward on parallel tracks,” writes Sr. Margaret Scott, ACJ of St. Raphaela Center (616 Coopertown Rd., Haverford, PA 19041). Curiously, even Vatican II fails “to make an explicit connection between the Eucharist and social justice.” (*The Eucharist and Social Justice*, Paulist Press [2009], 997 Macarthur Blvd., Mahwah, NJ 07430; \$16.95)

Over the years a few visionaries connected liturgy inside the church with liturgy (the work of the people) in the world. Among them: Fr. Virgil Michel, OSB (1890-1938) and others at St. John’s Abbey (PO Box 2015, Collegeville, MN 56321), Msgr. Reynold Hillenbrand (1904-1979) of Chicago and our own National Center for the Laity founder Msgr. Dan Cantwell (1915-1996).

Sr. Julia Upton, RSM supplies a biography of another pioneer: Fr. H.A. Reinhold (1897-1968), who in parish settings and as a chaplain in the Apostolate of the Sea (1500 Jefferson Dr., Port Arthur, TX 77642; www.aos-usa.org), implemented liturgical renewal several years before Vatican II. He wrote hundreds of articles on every aspect of liturgy, including art, architecture, music, feasts, liturgical cycles and more. Influenced by his contact with workers he constantly pointed the liturgy toward the church’s weeklong mission in the world.

The connection is not usually made, Reinhold thought, because going to Mass is “made into a private devotion.” When Catholic

worship is seen as a *God-and-me* affair, people eventually become religiously inarticulate. Prayer life is “reduced to a set of half a dozen formulas,” he laments. Instead of the creator and redeemer of the world, God is reduced to “the great bureaucrat to whom you submit your applications.” (*Worship in Spirit and Truth*, Liturgical Press [2009], PO Box 7500, Collegeville, MN 56321; \$24.95)

Our National Center for the Laity agrees that the notion of *private faith*, so prevalent in the U.S., is the main culprit. But NCL suggests one more reason: Among the few who attempt to connect the liturgy to daily life, there is an *outsider's model of social justice*. That is, they encourage worshippers to take the Bread of Life into involvement with a homeless shelter or the like. This is good and positive. But social justice in mainstream Catholic practice is about what happens at work. So, for example, are there creative ways to understand the offertory gifts, “the work of human hands,” as the tools, products, services and relationships of Monday to Friday jobs?

Please tell INITIATIVES of any attempts (successful or not) at your parish to connect liturgy and work.

Taking the Initiative

In Lay Formation

Robert Greenleaf (1904-1990) was an executive who promoted a managerial style now known as *servant leadership*. His ideas are perpetuated at the Greenleaf Center (770 Pawtucket Dr., Westfield, IN 46074; www.greenleaf.org) and through multiple press runs of his book *Servant Leadership* (Paulist Press [1977], 997 Macarthur Blvd., Mahwah, NJ 07430; \$24.95).

Now Dan Ebener pens *Servant Leadership Models for Your Parish* (Paulist Press [2010]; \$24.95), about a style of church leadership. This book includes stories about servant leaders who emerge from surprising places, including a woman who cleans the pews, a man who grabs tools from his pickup truck to fix a door before Mass and a dedicated group of lay religious education teachers.

Ebener, who was social action director for the Diocese of Davenport and now teaches organizational leadership for St. Ambrose University (518 W. Locust St., Davenport, IA 52803), includes stories of those who hold power positions in the church and ways that they practice servant leadership. There is a pastor, for example, who admits his mistakes. Other parish leaders give credit to others when things succeed

(directing attention out the window) and who model accountability when things don't work out (directing attention to the mirror).

Ebener demonstrates the concept that “the true measure of leadership is not how many followers you lead but how many leaders you develop.” This book has a solid research base from Catholic parishes; extensive examples and stories describing what servant leadership looks like; and an explanation of how and why servant leadership works. While it extensively quotes Scripture, the focus is on real servants in real leadership situations. Ebener's website is www.servantleadershipmodels.com.

Work Prayers

For Teachers

“Almighty Father, we bless Thee for children, for youth and for all who fill our institutions of learning. Reveal to them the glory and beauty of life. Enable them to rise to their opportunities. We implore Thy blessing, O God, on all the men and women who teach the youth of our nation. May they revere the young lives which have newly come from Thee. Gird these teachers for their task, and save them from loneliness, discouragement, the numbness of routine and all bitterness of heart. In all things draw us to the mind of the Great Teacher, in whose name we pray. Amen.”

--Malcus Ellison in *Conversations With God: Two Centuries of Prayers by African-Americans* edited by James Melvin (Harper Collins [1994], 1000 Keystone Industrial Pk., Scranton, PA 18512; \$15.99)

The Great Workbench

Tom Geoghegan sounds a tad defensive in his latest book, *Where You Born On the Wrong Continent?* (National Center for the Laity [2010], PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$18.25). “I'm no European socialist,” he writes. “If I had to choose (or even if I didn't), I'd always choose the U.S., always, forever.”

This tone precedes Geoghegan's assertion that most workers in Germany are better off and happier than those in the U.S. Further, the German economy is outpacing the U.S. on several measures.

Relax, Tom. Even the cyber *Bloomberg Business Week* (www.businessweek.com) agrees. “Germany is now growing faster than the U.S. and has a lower jobless rate... Germany is set to have the highest number of people working since reunification. While the U.S. flirts with

Japanese-style deflation, Germany's looming problem is worker shortages." (*Business Week* [9/30/10], 1221 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10020)

The German advantage, Geoghegan explains, is *work councils* (also called co-determinism) through which everyone in a company exercises power, "at least partially." Over time this mechanism yields "a more plausible form of capitalism than in the U.S."

Business Week highlights *Mittelstand companies*, Germany's "small and midsize manufacturers, often family-run." In contrast to the U.S. style "cowboy capitalism," these companies think long term. They count on bank loans to avoid "short-term pressures from bondholders and shareholders," and they "focus on quality."

Business Week also says Germany in recent years benefits from renegotiation of collective wage contracts. Geoghegan acknowledges this trend, but says wage moderation does not explain Germany's success.

Geoghegan certainly doesn't wish he were born elsewhere. He says, however, the U.S. could "do a lot better at capitalism," if we learn things like workers' participation from Western Europe.

Says Pope John Paul II (1920-2005): "Each person is fully entitled to consider themselves a part-owner of the great workbench at which they are working with everyone else." (*Pope John Paul II's Gospel of Work* by Bill Droel, National Center for the Laity, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$8.25)

Rest in Peace

Mary Beth Dunne (1953-2010)

Dunne was a founder and longest-serving board member of the National Center for the Laity. That's correct! Even before old-timers like Vaile Scott, Greg Pierce, Bill Droel and others, there was a 20something NCL leader: Mary Beth Toomey, later Dunne.

She was a spouse, mother and administrative judge in Albany, serving the Workers' Compensation Board, Family Court and Disability Assistance Office. She was a high school forensics coach, a Girl Scout leader and a board member at two schools, even during her nearly ten year battle against cancer.

Dunne contributed to several NCL publications, including *Spirituality of Work: Lawyers* (\$2) and *Of Human Hands* (\$8), and she spoke at NCL conferences. The NCL crew remembers her distinction between *proselytizing on the job* and *a spirituality of work*:

Handing out Bible verses to colleagues is not my style. Instead, the nameplate on my judge's bench or desk has a St. Teresa of Avila prayer taped to the back. "Let nothing bother you. Let nothing dismay

you. Everything passes. Patience gains all. God alone is enough." The prayer reminds me that my work is a fulfillment of Christ's call...

The next step in a spirituality of work is attention to conditions in the workplace. A busy courtroom, for example, can quickly become a bureaucratic, dehumanizing place. Rather than allowing this to happen, I write down and--as appropriate--mention birthdays, anniversaries or other such information that can personalize legal hearings.

Dunne took time to reflect on her cases. But how could she not? Her very first private practice case was to represent a divorced woman. To get the alimony flowing, Dunne sent a terse note to the lawyer for the former husband: "Pay up or we will see you in court." She mailed the letter on Monday. The other lawyer met with the man on Thursday. Late on Friday Dunne's boss called her in: "Our client's husband killed himself."

"Law school taught me how to handle the paperwork," says Dunne. "My faith has to help me process the meaning of my work."

Dunne was a chronicler of NCL events, often serving as secretary and always taking pictures. She was adept at blending themes and images into concluding remarks or liturgical prayers at an event's conclusion. "As we venture into the world," says Dunne, "we get dirt on our hands. But then by letting God shine through us, we turn the dirt into gold. This happens whenever we allow our work to be a witness, a ministry."

Dunne participated in her last NCL conference at Yale University about three years ago. Your INITIATIVES' editor left there with a heavy heart, suspecting it was a final worldly encounter. But then grace took a turn. Not so long ago I was in the Loop (Chicago's downtown), walking on a bridge across the Chicago River. A busload of touring students was stopped at a light in an opposite lane. Hanging out the window and yelling my name was their chaperone. We yelled back-and-forth for a couple minutes. It was so improbable. Was it really her?

The danger in verifying such events (like this traffic encounter or like the Resurrection) is not that one learns they didn't really happen. It is the risk of losing fragile, existential grace under such heavy analysis. But we subsequently corresponded; indeed, Dunne was showing her debate team some Chicago highlights and noticed me among the pedestrians!

My keyboard is covered with tears.

Happenings

Sr. Helen Carey, OSB will speak on “The Spirituality of Work,” February 1, 2011 at St. Ambrose University (518 W. Locust St. #McMullen 108, Davenport, IA 52803; www.sau.edu). Her talk is part of a two-semester series titled “The Ubiquity of Work.” In addition to periodic talks, the series features art exhibits, concerts and films on the topic.

The Leadership Conference of Women Religious (8808 Cameron St., Silver Spring, MD 20910; www.womenandspirit.org) has a travelling exhibit, *Women and Spirit*. It celebrates the contributions U.S. nuns have made to educating, healing, and serving new arrivals and citizens of our country. Fittingly, the inspiring exhibit is at Ellis Island (17 Battery Pl. #210, New York, NY 10004; www.ellisland.org) through January 2011. It then moves to Dubuque on February 18, 2011 and then to Los Angeles on June 19, 2011.

Some Catholic leaders in the U.S. admire liberation theology from Latin America. Yet, observes the National Center for the Laity, too few reflect on our North American liberation practice and its attendant theology, particularly the contributions of women religious. Your INITIATIVES’ editor develops this point in the foreword to *Sr. Margie Henninger: Going To Bat for Humanity* (Spiritus Publications [2010], 121 N. Fitzhugh St., Rochester, NY 14614; \$10).

Interfaith Worker Justice (1020 W. Bryn Mawr #400, Chicago, IL 60660; www.iwj.org) will celebrate its 15th anniversary with a June 19-21, 2011 conference in Chicago. More details in a subsequent INITIATIVES.

Websites, Blogs and Resources

Mission-Driven Business Education Curriculum (John A. Ryan Institute, 2115 Summit Ave. #55S, St. Paul, MN 55105; www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies/cst/curriculum/BusCurrmaterial.html) is a website for economics and business faculty who want students to look outward. There are sections on micro-economics, ethics, marketing, Catholic social thought and more. The site is one effort of the Catholic Business Education Project, to which 18 colleges belong, including a National Center for the Laity favorite: Dominican University (7900 W. Division St., River Forest, IL 60305; www.dom.edu).

Anthony Downs (www.anthonydowns.com), former National Center for the Laity board member, is the self-described “world’s leading authority” on real estate outlook, financial markets, public transportation, urban revitalization and many other topics. He claims to be “modest too.” Smile. Downs is available for talks and several of his articles are on the website. His latest book is *Real Estate and the Financial Crisis* (Urban Land Institute, 1025 Thomas Jefferson St. NW #500W, Washington, DC 20007; www.uli.org; \$29.95).

Bob Senser, longtime friend of National Center for the Laity, is editor of *Human Rights for Workers* (www.humanrightsforworkers.blogspot.com) and author of *Justice At Work: Globalization and the Human Rights of Workers* (National Center for the Laity, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$15).

Greg Pierce, former president of National Center for the Laity, hosts an interactive e-mail, *Faith and Work in Cyberspace*. Join by sending your e-address to gpierce@actapublications.com.

Pierce’s company, Acta Publications (4848 N. Clark St., Chicago, IL 60640; www.actapublications.com), has relocated to within blocks of Wrigley Field where he faithfully awaits the April 1, 2011 opener against the Pirates. Until then Pierce and his crew are busy editing and printing a new National Center for the Laity booklet, *What Is Social Justice?*

INITIATIVES

www.catholiclabor.org/NCL.htm

Published eight or nine times per year by
National Center for the Laity, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629

Editor: Bill Droel (wdroel@cs.com).

Contributing to this issue: Msgr. Marv Mottet of Davenport, IA.

Fr. Sinclair Oubre (Catholic Labor Network, 1500 Jefferson Dr., Port Arthur, TX 77642; www.catholiclabor.org) hosts the web version of INITIATIVES at www.catholiclabor.org/NCL.htm.

The National Center for the Laity—beginning its 34th year--is an independent 501-C-3 corporation, chartered in the State of Illinois. Its board members include Tom Donnelly, Bill Droel, John Hazard, Phil Moore, Terry Mambu Rasch, Vince Rougeau, Lauren Sukal, Frosty Pipal and Vaile Scott (president).

Visit *The Working Catholic* (www.chicagocatholicnews.com), a new blog by INITIATIVES' editor Bill Droel.

“The Second Vatican Council spoke eloquently of the indispensable role of the laity in carry forward the church’s mission through their efforts to serve as a leaven of the gospel in society and to work for the advancement of God’s kingdom in the world... Each of us has a mission; each of us is called to change the world, to work for a culture of life, a culture forged by love and respect for the dignity of each person.”

—Pope Benedict XVI in England (*The Tablet* [10/8/10], 1 King St. Cloisters, Clifton Walk, London W60QZ England)