

Initiatives

In Support of Christians in the World

National Center for the Laity
PO Box 291102
Chicago, IL 60629

www.catholiclabor.org/NCL.htm

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50 Years since Vatican II

Believe it or not, our National Center for the Laity is controversial. Not in the standard *liberal vs. conservative* way. No, the tension is more intramural. Yet, internal fights are often the hardest and, over time, significant.

The basic criticism is that NCL is nostalgic; decidedly *old school*; that it wants a “two-tiered” church in which clergy are in charge of sacraments and the like while laity stick to their families and jobs.

In response NCL simply says that it follows Vatican II (1962-1965), which defined the church as all baptized people—including the ordained, Church employees, parish volunteers, homemakers, executives, millwrights, fast food workers, journalists and students. NCL says that most Christians most of the time best serve the gospel of peace and justice through their work—on the job, around the home and in the neighborhood. In-house ministries or parish and diocesan justice projects might provide a Christian with leadership training and support. Once, however, those *churchy* involvements seem to be the norm, many young workers conclude that *church* is for those in church programs. Given that impression, these young adults then assume daily life—their primary relationships and their careers—is irrelevant to faith.

NCL exists for those who can creatively hold two opposing ideas in tension. That, for example, the material is spiritual; that the secular is sacred; that faith occurs in places where people sometimes swear, cut corners and other ways sin. NCL says the church is not identical to but not distinct from the world. NCL says that firmness in doctrine is hinged to a willingness to act on ambiguity, and then to repent as necessary. Likewise, confidence in one’s Catholicism requires one to dialogue with other Christians, with other traditions and with those who reject religion.

God created everything and redeemed everyone. Yet says NCL, God still counts on people to somehow further creation and redemption; not usually by imposing on others, but by facilitating the creativity and forgiveness

that is already inside individuals and by prudently improving workplace and neighborhood settings to better reflect the intention God has for each institution.

Attention Readers

National Center for the Laity’s annual donation appeal is in process. Please help us during this Holy Season meet our 2015 budget with a generous response. A donation form is on page eight.

Taking the Initiative

Among Investment Bankers

Josh Barro, now a journalist, participated in a *two and out* program with a major bank. Several banks (and recently tech companies and others) offer a two-year tryout to recent liberal arts graduates—a job with decent pay, some prestige, plenty of structure and the promise of meaningfulness.

My job, Barro says, “helped me develop analytical and communication skills that have served me well.” He is “very glad” to have had intense banking experience. (*N.Y. Times*, 6/1/14)

Barro admits that there are “lots of miserable bankers” in the *two and out* program like those profiled by Kevin Roose in *Young Money* (Grand Central Publishing [2014], 237 Park Ave., New York, NY 10017; \$27). The tryout appeals to students who, Roose explains, despite their exterior are awash in today’s culture. Investment banking is risky, yet these temporary positions feel firm to the recent grads. Unfortunately, many of the jobs are not that meaningful and the young adults leave exhausted and alone.

The general public, still recovering from the recession, has little sympathy for those in the finance sector. Yet some members of the people of God extend an invitation to them.

Redeemer Presbyterian Church (1359 Broadway #400, New York, NY 10018; www.redeemer.com) is dedicated to “renewing the city socially, spiritually and culturally.” It was founded 25-years ago with an outward-

looking bias, particularly toward those who are skeptical about church. Its Center for Faith and Work has programs to connect with “the day-to-day hustle of New York.” In particular, there is a short course for those in finance “to explore faith and work integration.”

Old St. Patrick’s (711 W. Monroe, Chicago, IL 60661; www.oldstpats.org) is not, it says, a parish with a mission but a mission that is connected to a parish. Located in Chicago’s Loop, St. Patrick’s attracts young adults and then retains them because, in addition to good liturgy, it helps them to discover their vocations, especially as they give of themselves to the city. WTTW (5400 N. St. Louis Ave., Chicago, IL 60625; www.wttw.com) has produced a documentary, *Old St. Pat’s: A Chicago Renaissance*.

Taking the Initiative

To Provide Loans

The recession is not over for many people who are unemployed and/or in debt. Meanwhile many strains in our economic culture encourage the same behavior among lenders and consumers that led to the recession.

St. John the Evangelist (Lower Hill Rd., Burgess Hill RH15 9AA, England) has a café. On Tuesdays five volunteers at a corner table confidentially chat with people about finances. As appropriate, they refer people to nearby West Sussex Credit Union. This effort is part of Church Credit Union Network (Hector Sants, Great Smith St., London SW1P 3AZ, England; www.churchofengland.org), an effort to provide alternatives to payday loans and usurious credit card interest. (*The Tablet* [8/2/14], 1 King St. Cloisters, Clifton Walk, London W60QZ, England)

There is now a cap on payday loan debt in England—the total loan times two. By comparison, someone in the U.S. can quickly acquire a debt of the original total plus three times the original.

The British cap is the result of a campaign by Citizens UK (112 Cavell St., London E1 2JA, England; www.citizensuk.org), an inter-religious organization that is also promoting a living wage. (*The Huffington Post* [11/26/13], www.huffingtonpost.com; also see **120+ Years** column below.)

In the for-profit sector a growing number of micro-lending companies are creating an alternative to big name credit cards and banks,

reports William Cohan (*The Atlantic* [9/14], 600 New Hampshire Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20037). They use a cyber-strategy similar to *crowd sourcing* to precisely match investors with individual borrowers. They don’t have the overhead and profit margin of a big lender.

Lending Club (71 Stevenson #300, San Francisco, CA 94105; www.lendingclub.com) is a leader in this movement. The lenders risk not getting repaid, though the practice is regulated by SEC. Loans typically range around \$14, 000 for tuition or medical procedure.

Taking the Initiative

For Home Health Care

Nearly 40 years ago the Supreme Court ruled that in some circumstances a public sector worker can conscientiously opt out of paying union dues. That worker, however, pays a small *agency fee* to the union for maintaining a contract and delivering other benefits.

In June 2014 the same court considered *Pamela Harris vs. Gov. Patrick Quinn of Illinois*. Harris, who is not represented by a union, cares for her disabled son. She gets state money for her labor of love. She sued so that if there ever were a vote for a bargaining unit, she would be allowed to neither pay dues nor the agency fee.

The court, in a narrow ruling, created a gray area for Harris and others whom it calls “quasi-public employees” because they are not full-time in a state facility. The court maneuvered around its earlier ruling by not requiring the agency fee for quasi-workers only. (*Labor Notes* [8/14], 7435 Michigan Ave. Detroit, MI 48210)

The court’s June decision does not prohibit so-called quasi-workers from forming a union, as your INITIATIVES’ editor learned in late August while at the Minnesota State Fair. Your editor bypassed the pronto pups (a hot dog encased in special flour, then deep fried) and cheese curds (don’t ask) in favor of a sampling of local brews. (The hotel provided a van.) At one of many pavilions your editor spotted a podium surrounded by several people in purple shirts. They were home health care workers who that day and just two months after the Harris ruling became members of SEIU Healthcare (345 Randolph Ave. #100, St. Paul, MN 55102; www.unitedhomecareworkersmn.org). The vote was 60% in favor of the union, though many eligible workers did not vote.

The announcement, reports Abby Simons, was the result of “one of Minnesota’s largest labor organizing efforts since the [Great] Depression [and it] makes the United Home Care Workers the largest unit in Minnesota to seek union certification since the Wagner Act passed in 1935.” Currently, Simons writes, quasi-public personal care aides make about \$23,000 annually in Minnesota, a little more than the national average. (*Star Tribune*, 8/27/14)

Now back to the Harris case. The dominant culture correctly rests upon respect for each person’s rights--although the unborn and sometimes others are not included among *persons*. Catholicism adds balance to individual liberty with its *principle of solidarity*, whereby individual goals must aim toward community benefit. Thus Catholic doctrine imposes a duty to participate in community groups like neighborhood schools or parishes or unions, particularly when one benefits from his or her union.

As a corollary, Catholic doctrine does not use the phrase *outside third party*—which was part of Harris’ argument. In an organic society there are many interrelated parties, including those to whom Harris has no objection: government which pays her, big pharmacies that assist her and more. Unions, workers’ associations, or guilds, are simply a normal way people can exercise virtue in regard to work. Though not every workplace has to have a union, they are, says St. John Paul II (1920-2005), “indispensable” in a free society. (*Our Sunday Visitor* [8/3/14], 200 Noll Plaza, Huntington, IN 46750 and see *Catholic Administrators and Labor Unions*, National Center for the Laity, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$8, also includes a copy of *St. John Paul II’s Gospel of Work*)

Taking the Initiative For Veterans

Last year one-half million veterans received two or more treatments each for stress disorder in a Veterans Administration facility. (*Wall St. Journal*, 9/14/14)

Mayslake Ministries (718 Ogden Ave. #200, Downers Grove, IL 60515; www.mayslakeministries.org) offers at no cost four retreats for vets dealing with stress disorder: January 23-25, 2015 and September 18-20, 2015 in Mundelein, IL plus May 29-31, 2015 November 20-22, 2015 in Racine, WI.

Stress disorder from combat is not the only toll on a service person’s health and family. Many veterans who remained stateside or who did not experience combat have difficulty with employment, drugs or finances.

The military makes a distinction between *financial education* and *financial planning*. It provides education, often through contractors. It prohibits planning so that planners do not try to sell unsuitable products to service members, reports Ann Marsh. In any case, a finance session with a service person lasts about 15 minutes.

There is, as would be expected, a connection between financial problems and suicide. Again, difficulties befall both those who were in combat and those never deployed. One Pentagon study says the never deployed category accounts for 50% of suicides. Interestingly, all active duty personnel get a \$400,000 life insurance policy that, unlike with most policies, pays in suicide situations.

A small movement within the military and among a few financial planners seeks a way to help veterans with debt and longer-term stability. For now, it is hit-and-miss. (*Financial Planning* [5/14], 1 State St. Plaza #2700, New York, NY 10004)

120+ Years Of Catholic Social Thought

The number *120* in this recurring column’s heading refers to 1891, the year Pope Leo XIII (1810-1903) issued *On the Condition of Labor*, the first modern social encyclical. Thus, the column’s heading will become *125 Years* in about 13 months.

Condition of Labor was not, of course, the first time Christianity addressed economics and social conditions. The theme started with Jesus and continues today and tomorrow. *Condition of Labor* itself was preceded and influenced by others in the industrial era, including Cardinal Henry Edward Manning (1808-1982) of England.

A few weeks ago Caritas Anchor House (81 Barking Rd., Canning Town, London E16 4BH; www.caritasanchorhouse.org.uk) hosted a Mass and reception to honor the 125th anniversary of the London Dock Strike, which Manning mediated to an acceptable conclusion. In fact, the episode is often now called *The Cardinal’s Peace*.

Manning came from a prosperous family. His father owned a sugar company, served on the board of the Bank of England and in Parliament. Prosperous, that is, until the business went bankrupt.

Manning was ordained in the Church of England. He felt, however, that the church was isolated from the working class. In time he also saw the Anglican church drift away from a clear doctrine of sacraments.

Manning's wife died suddenly of an illness at age 25, a loss which he mourned his entire life. Manning's questions about the Anglican church intensified at that time. At age 43 Manning was received into the Catholic church and appointed bishop of Westminster in 1865 with, it might be noted, an extreme understanding of papal authority.

Issues like child trafficking and the needs of poor, particularly Irish working in England, were always his concern. Manning's "sermons rarely lacked a social theme [and his] passion for social justice only increased with the years," writes Fr. Thomas Bokenkotter in *Church and Revolution* (Image Books [1998], 1745 Broadway #1000, New York, NY 10019; \$27).

The 1889 London Dock Strike "paralyzed the whole economy of London," says Msgr. John Armitage. Manning, though respected by employers, had firm opinions about work conditions. "He was unflinchingly behind [the workers] demand for an increase in the hourly rate [and] he could not abide the notorious *call-on* system," what in the U.S. is called a hiring hall for day labor. In fact, Armitage continues, Manning favored the "union demand that no man should be taken on for less than four hours" of work. Other mediators got frustrated and walked away, but the 81-years old Manning brought the dispute to peaceful conclusion.

"The same parishes that were active in the [1889] strike are still filled with people living in poverty or struggling on low wages," says Armitage. Thus, in addition to participating in the Caritas Anchor House service, Armitage and others are leaders in East London Communities Organization (112 Cavell St., London E1 2JA, England; www.citizensuk.org). The group is involved with a Living Wage campaign and has been able to certify about 500 reputable area employers through Living Wage Foundation (www.livingwage.org.uk). (*The Tablet* [9/6/14], 1 King St. Cloisters, Clifton Walk, London W60QZ, England)

Rest in Peace

Philip Moore (1936 -2014)

Moore was past-president of our National Center for the Laity, succeeding Greg Pierce and preceding Vaile Scott (1926-2013).

As a young adult Moore worked at Chicago's St. Benet's Bookshop. Sara O'Neill (1869-1954) founded St. Benet's in 1924. It gradually took off, but was in financial trouble by 1943. Then, Bishop Bernard Sheil (1888-1969) gave it new life within his empire of lay-centered groups. Nina Polcyn came on board at that time and led St. Benet's, which became independent. It was an intellectual powerhouse. More than a bookstore, it was a hub for liturgical resources, seminars and casual gatherings of personalities—local, national and international visitors. The St. Benet's experience filled Moore with ideas on liturgy, Scripture and social action—ideas that would culminate in Vatican II (1962-1965). There too he met those leaders who would subsequently found our NCL.

Moore got connected with NCL in the late 1980s. Faustin Pipal Sr. (1922-1994), an original signer of NCL's 1977 charter, was involved with Mayslake Ministries (718 Ogden Ave. #200, Downers Grove, IL 60515; www.mayslakeministries.org). Pipal put the two organizations together for a series of Good Work retreats. Moore was one of the presenters. Moore also participated in NCL's Business Executives for Economic Justice, a support group for chief executives. He was CEO of Visiting Nurse Association at that time; having previously served as an administrator for Advocate Good Samaritan Hospital during a major construction phase. BEEJ members held strong opinions and were passionate about workplace topics. Moore was always a gentle voice, able to express a few reasonable words. He was the consummate *gentleman-leader*.

Of course, neither NCL nor St. Benet's can claim exclusive credit for Moore. He studied at St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore and then at North American College in Rome. He was a longtime associate at Marmion Abbey (850 Butterfield Rd., Aurora, IL 60502; www.marmion.org), a Benedictine center. (Coincidentally: *St. Benet* is an Anglicized form of *St. Benedict*.)

Moore and his wife Marian of 51 years raised three sons.

"It doesn't matter when or how I learned that life makes sense when I put Jesus

first,” said Moore. It is not so simple to make “my work, family, community relationships and my leisure time the basics of a spiritual life. There is not much written or preached about how married people with children and full-time careers really develop a relationship with God specifically in those areas. [Yet] if I can use my special faith lens when I work, I can help shape and influence structures, policies and operating principles which in turn can lead to an environment of openness, freedom and empowerment of people.”



Phil Moore

Happenings

Blessings to Cardinal Francis George, OMI, our bishop in Chicago from April 1997 until this past month.

“The word *liberal* is notoriously slippery,” says Edmund Fawcett in *Liberalism: the Life of an Idea* (Princeton University Press [2014], 41 William St., Princeton, NJ 08540; \$35). So, what did George mean when at an NCL Mass in January 1998 he said: “Liberal Catholicism is an exhausted project, parasitical on a substance that no longer exists”? Maybe the one-liner was directed at Catholics who, influenced by John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) and other classical Liberal thinkers, put individual liberty and the so-called *free market* ahead of community and workers. If so, the economic crash of 2008 proved George right—though some Catholics still don’t get the message. Or, maybe he was referring to Catholics who are extreme individualists on so-called *culture issues*, like abortion.

George didn’t explain himself and things would have been soon forgotten. But at that very moment local TV and newspapers got a release saying, “George is elevated to the college of cardinals.” By the time NCL conference participants, including George, made their way from Mass to dinner, pencil press were around. Naturally, in profiling George for the next edition, they picked out his most recent controversial remark—the one-liner about liberal Catholics. The incident inserted NCL into local news and in national magazines—which is usually a plus for a small group like NCL. In this case not all reports clarified that NCL is not liberal in the sense of favoring an unfettered individualistic market or liberal in supporting abortion.

In October 1999 George tried to clarify his view at a Commonwealth Forum, noting the other half of the challenge: Conservative Catholicism is obsessive and “too sectarian” to succeed. Over time and particularly in his later books, George developed this theme: Extreme liberalism and extreme conservatism are out of date and out of harmony with what he calls “simply Catholicism.”

George participated in other NCL conferences. At one he mentioned that while stationed in Rome from 1974-1988 he found NCL’s charter, *Chicago Declaration of Christian Concern*, in his morning mail. “Someone finally has gotten it right,” he thought upon reading it.

Ed Marciniak (1917-2004), an NCL founder, spent his final months mostly confined to his Edgewater apartment. George scheduled a pastoral visit there at that time. Mustering up his old political instincts Marciniak told your INITIATIVES’ editor to join them: “You can lobby George.” But, I reminded Marciniak of George’s true purpose and stayed away. A few years later, in a private meeting, George mentioned the visit to me and I told him of Marciniak’s *lobby* comment. George smiled and then expressed his admiration for Marciniak, for other pre-Vatican II Chicago prophets and for NCL. He urged NCL to keep *lobbying* for a lay-centered church.

By the 1960s the church “needed to look again at how she could most effectively change the world,” George once wrote. That was a reason for Vatican II (1962-1965). Unfortunately, “we have allowed a missionary Council to be domesticated. The greatest failure of the post-Vatican II church is the failure to have formed and to call forth a laity engaged in the world in order to change it, a laity engaged in the world politically, economically, culturally and socially.” If instead, George continued, “we paid less attention to [in-house] ministries and to expertise and to functions, necessary though all of that is, and [paid

more attention] to mission or purpose, then we might recapture the sense of what should be genuinely new as a result of Vatican II.” (*Origins* [6/20/03], 3211 Fourth St. NE, Washington, DC 20017)

Tip of the hat to NCL’s own Tom Donnelly. The Catholic Lawyers Guild (515 N. State St. #2800, Chicago, IL 60654; www.clgchicago.org) chose him as “Lawyer of the Year” for 2014. The award was presented following the annual Red Mass in October. Donnelly, now a Cook County judge, has *More* for his middle name. So maybe his baptism came with a mandate to be an exemplary lawyer.

And a second tip of the hat to NCL co-chair Lauren Sukal who just landed a job as grant administrator for Gaithersburg, MD in the affordable housing and community services division.

Opus: Art of Work (500 College Dr. Wheaton, IL 60187; www.wheaton.edu/BGCE/training-ministries/vocation) will have its “launch week” January 27-31, 2015, celebrating “economic work as an essential part of an overall witness to the goodness of God.” Some young adults might be inclined to serve the world and among those some connect their feeling to gospel values, says the new center. But how to bring those impulses to an uncertain marketplace and amid society’s pressures? The center will help students and others address that challenge.

Catholic Social Ministry Gathering (3211 Fourth St. NE, Washington, DC 20017; www.catholicsocialministrygathering.org) will be held February 7-10, 2015. Its sponsors include several offices within the U.S. bishops’ conference plus Catholic Charities, Catholic Relief Services and others. As in previous years, the Catholic Labor Network (1500 Jefferson Dr., Port Arthur, TX 77642; www.catholiclabor.org) will caucus at the gathering; specifically February 7, 2015 from 9 A.M. to Noon.

Villanova University (Ministry and Mission, 800 E. Lancaster Ave., Villanova, PA 19085; marcella.bray@villanova.edu) sponsors several talks on Catholicism and the financial crisis. Charles Clark from St. John’s University speaks on January 27, 2015; Stefano Zamagni, who assisted with *Charity in Truth* by Pope Benedict XVI (National Center for the Laity, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$7), is on February 13, 2015; and Christine Firer Hinze from Fordham University is on March 25, 2015.

NCL joins the Center for Social Concerns (1212 Geddes Hall, Notre Dame, IN 46556; www.centerforsocialconcerns.nd.edu) in sponsoring “Joy and Hope,” a conference about Vatican II (1962-1965) during its 50th anniversary. Early registration discount ends next month.

Patheos is an inter-religious, ecumenical cyber-resource that includes lots of op-ed pieces, celebrity profiles, video clips, book suggestions and lots more. One section, www.patheos.com/blogs/missionwork, is in tune with NCL’s agenda. Its contributors comment on magazine articles and the like from a perspective of faith in daily life. The section has links to other faith and work blogs.

Look for Tom Geoghegan’s just-off-the-press book, *Only One Thing Can Save Us* (New Press [2014], 38 Greene St., New York, NY 10013; \$25.95). Using examples from his legal practice and his encounters around Chicago, Geoghegan addresses inequality and names measures that will stabilize the economy.

By the way, the website of Geoghegan’s law firm (www.dsgchicago.com) contains his thoughts on the college ranking system, the taxi business, Chicago politics and other topics.

The Center for Christian Study (128 Chancellor St., Charlottesville, VA 22903; www.studycenter.net) launches a “Theological Discernment of Vocation” project that explores a Christian view of work through reading groups, guest speakers, a vocation fair and a course about vocation at the University of Virginia.

The Institute for Politics (5707 S. Woodlawn, Chicago, IL 60637; www.politics.uchicago.edu) now has a Sargent Shriver Program for Leadership. Third-year undergrads will be selected to participate in workshops, field assignments and then an internship.

Shriver (1915-2011) participated in the founding convention for our National Center for the Laity. His biography is *Sarge* by Scott Stossel (Other Press [2004], 2 Park Ave. #2400, New York, NY 10016; \$19.95). *A Good Man* by Mark Shriver (Henry Holt [2012], 175 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010; \$14.99) is a touching memoir by his son.

The Pastoral Center (106 Water St. W., St. Paul, MN 55107; www.pastoralcenter.com/work.html) has a new *Spirituality of Work Small Group Guide*. Produced in cooperation with National Center for the Laity, this e-resource is specific to each of six occupations plus a mixed-occupational guide.

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The National Center for the Laity's board is Chuck DiSalvo, Tom Donnelly, Bill Droel, John Hazard, Caroline Hopkinson, Frosty Pipal, Terry Mambu Rasch and Lauren Sukal.

Thanks to Fr. Sinclair Oubre for hosting NCL's website (www.catholiclabor.org/NCL.htm), which now includes 100 back issues of INITIATIVES.

Oubre is a leader in the Catholic Labor Network and in the Apostleship of the Sea (1500 Jefferson Dr., Port Arthur, TX 77642; www.aos-usa.org).

AOS was started by laypeople in Scotland in 1920. It is now worldwide. Its headquarters stateside is in the national bishops' Cultural Diversity Office (3211 Fourth St. NE, Washington, DC 20017; www.usccb.org). Sr. Myrna Tordillo, MSCS directs that office. It publishes *Catholic Maritime News* and resources those involved with nautical shipping and leisure.

Oubre's AOS-USA is similar. It is an association of those who minister to seafarers. In addition to ministry in ports, AOS-USA sponsors the Cruise Ship Priest Program, which began because some troubled priests and some imposters presented themselves to cruise lines, only to spend their time carousing on board. I "tell priests all the time: If you want a [leisurely] cruise, buy a ticket," says Oubre.

This past summer Oubre spent a month on a 250-foot ocean tugboat, not primarily as chaplain but to learn from the workers. I was mostly "busting rust and painting," he says. (*National Catholic Reporter* [9/11/14], PO Box 410890, Kansas City., MO 64141)



Fr. Sinclair Oubre (left)

“When we work, it is [God] who commissions us. It is not a matter of indifference to [God] how the carpenter makes the table, how the mother runs her home, and how the doctor serves his [or her] patients. There is an inferior kind of piety that seeks to enhance the things of God by disparaging the things of the world. But the things of the world are not unimportant, nor are they a matter of indifference, least of all to God... God has put his work into people’s hands for them to maintain and continue, and he wants them to complete it for his joy and to give meaning to their own lives. God is with us when we do our work, whatever it may be.” –Msgr. Romano Guardini (1885-1968) in *The Living God* (Sophia Press [1997], PO Box 5284, Manchester, NH 03108), as found in *Magnificat* (PO Box 822, Yonkers, NY 10702; 9/14)