

# Initiatives

In Support of Christians in the World

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

[www.catholiclabor.org/NCL.htm](http://www.catholiclabor.org/NCL.htm)

Feb.  
2016

Number  
224

## We Are In Chicago

The notion that spirituality can be individually constructed is wrong. To a significant degree one's spirituality is derived from the place where a person works, maintains a family and is civically involved. There is, for example, a North American spirituality. More particularly, there is Chicago spirituality.

The National Center for the Laity values all its supporters in each of the 50 states and at military bases, plus those in Canada and in Australia, Chile, Costa Rica, England, France, Germany, Malaysia, Malta and Switzerland. But unlike a pure cyber-group, NCL wants a geographical setting and since its 1978 founding NCL has been in Chicago.

And Chicago is on this shore of Lake Michigan because of food. Not originally because of deep dish pizza or uniquely garnished hotdogs. Daniel Block and Howard Rosing provide the history in *Chicago: A Food Biography* (Rowman & Littlefield [2015], 4501 Forbes Blvd. #200, Lanham, MD 20706; \$38). Chicago's attraction was a short portage from the Great Lakes (which meant access to East Coast cities and European markets) onto the Mississippi River system and thereby to Western farmlands.

Chicago, an Indian word for *place of wild onions*, greatly advanced as a food capital in 1848 when the Illinois & Michigan Canal directly connected the Great Lakes through Chicago to the Mississippi River. Also in 1848 the Galena & Chicago Union Railroad opened, again linking East and West. In 1848 the Chicago Board of Trade likewise opened, efficiently increasing the exchange of crops and manufactured goods. And in 1848 the Bull's Head Stockyard opened in Chicago; a precursor to the Union Stockyards. (There is more on the stockyards and other food news herein.)

So, what is Chicago spirituality? It is a hearty spirituality that emerges from and is nourished in the conviviality of restaurants, bars, parish hall potlucks and particularly in family kitchens. Further, for many of us Chicago spirituality centers on Christ's dinner table, the

Eucharist. That meal, in turn, animates the weekday Mystical Body of Christ alive in workplaces, neighborhoods and among the poor.

As an exchange center, Chicago attracts and mixes many cultures—German, Irish, black, Polish, Mexican, Italian, Greek, Middle-Eastern and more. Its spirituality is consequently fond of stories; those told in family settings, those featuring an urban character, and those about the city's saints and sinners. In fact, Studs Terkel (1912-2008), who was Jewish, is a patron saint of Chicago spirituality because of his contribution to theology-by-storytelling.

People came and continue to come to this grand marketplace called *Chicago* because of the opportunity to work. Chicago spirituality is thus the daily work that occurs here, in harmony with God's creative work and God's suffering and redemption. This leads to an activist strain in Chicago spirituality--a major theme of INITIATIVES.

It is in Chicago's neighborhoods where workers and their families plant themselves and where cultural differences are negotiated and where in fits and starts people gain confidence and skills to weave an urban tapestry. Thus in Chicago spirituality a neighborhood is a sacrament. It is the place of creative tension between particularity and common purpose.

There are other characteristics and those just mentioned are not exclusive to this city. For now, INITIATIVES invites comments on a *spirituality of place*. What does it mean to be a Minnesota Christian? What does Iowa contribute to the spiritual life? What it is like to live the faith in Tennessee? What are the spiritual accents in Philadelphia or in New Orleans?

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## Taking the Initiative

### *In the Stockyards*

Just before Thanksgiving, INITIATIVES went to Stanley's Tavern (4258 S. Ashland Ave., Chicago, IL 60609; [www.stanleys.beer](http://www.stanleys.beer)). It is among the oldest in Chicago, opening in 1924 and in 1935 moving to its current corner location, across from the west entrance to the old stockyards. Continuously

owned and staffed by one family, its matriarch is 92-year old Wanda Kurek. She, along with family members Walt Kurek and Maria Kosinski, was on duty during INITIATIVES' visit. A couple extra workers joined the crew because an overflow crowd packed the place.

INITIATIVES and many others were there to honor Dominic Pacyga and to discuss his book, *Slaughterhouse: Chicago's Union Stockyard* (University of Chicago Press [2015], 1427 E. 60<sup>th</sup> St., Chicago, IL 60637; \$26).

The Union Stockyard opened on Christmas 1865 and closed in 1971. The growth years were 1890 to 1925. The yard was seemingly in full gear in the 1950s, but as Pacyga writes, the factors of decline were already in place by the 1930s.

Sometimes called *Packingtown* or *The Square Mile*, the yard was actually multiple businesses, Pacyga explains. The Union Stock Yard and Transit Co. operated the facilities. The Chicago Livestock Exchange regulated the market for livestock sellers, brokers and meat buyers. Over 30 slaughterhouses and meat packing companies were located in or near the 450 acre site. Other nearby places used animal waste to make soap, fertilizer, glue, buttons and more. The yard had its own hotel, restaurants, four banks, a newspaper, pumping station, police and fire departments and a beltline railroad with 250 miles of track within the site. Several neighborhoods were economically and culturally connected to the yards, including over 50 churches, scores of taverns, small businesses, social service agencies and more.

Pacyga makes the case that the engineering, efficiency, coordinated process and sheer size of the Chicago Stockyard symbolized the triumph of modern life. In the early 1900s over 500,000 tourists annually came to witness the spectacle. In those days Swift & Co. daily processed 2,500 cattle and 8,000 hogs.

Modern innovation created the yard and then made it unnecessary. Take refrigeration, for example. Without it animals had to arrive in Chicago on four hoofs. The meat had to be locally distributed or preserved in order to ship to the East. In the early 1840s engineers experimented with refrigerated (iced) boxcars and by 1875 Gustavus Swift (1839-1903) had launched an entire boxcar fleet. In the 1960s liquid nitrogen replaced ice, allowing efficient shipping by train, airplane and truck. So why then do animals have to come to Chicago? Consequently food processing decentralized.

Pacyga has a great sentence in his chapter about labor relations: "The packers' concern for the comfort of their livestock did not necessarily extend to their workers." The 1906 novel about the stockyards, *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair (1878-1968), is dedicated to "the workingmen of America." The book led to reforms—but not directly in labor relations, more in food safety. The treatment of food workers is still problematic. (See subsequent items in this INITIATIVES.)

What is now happening? The area is called Stockyards Industrial Corridor, which Pacyga judges to be a rare good example of tax increment financing. All together there are about 70 firms (food processing, transport and manufacturing) in the corridor, employing about 15,000 workers. There are a handful of meat companies that did not leave in 1971. One kills about 400 hogs plus some sheep each week. It has an on-site market. Another pre-1971 company is leased and kills about 3,000 sheep each week. There are also new businesses, including some in shipping, some in manufacturing and some in the food industry. Unfortunately, Tyson Foods with 480 workers just closed.

Pacyga particularly highlights Testa Produce (4555 S. Racine, Chicago, IL 60629). It distributes to stores and restaurants that feature local and organic fare. It is environmentally progressive, including a windmill. He also mentions The Plant (1400 W. 46<sup>th</sup> St., Chicago, IL 60629). It is a hub for small firms specializing in sustainable food production.

The corridor, Pacyga admits, has its share of urban problems. The side streets are desolate at night, as INITIATIVES can attest. But truck drivers, police, food industry workers, bricklayers and more still frequent Stanley's. As Chicago now gradually recovers from the recession, the neighborhood has signs of new life: renewed civic engagement, housing rehab and some new construction, plus continued investment by immigrants, urban pioneers and others.

## **Taking the Initiative With Poultry**

Catholicism supports genetic experiments. After all it was a Catholic, Fr. Gregor Mendel, OSA (1822-1884), who developed modern genetics. However, as Pope Francis writes, each genetic application must

meet a “balanced and prudent” moral test, weighing as many “pertinent variables” as possible. The moral considerations include any destruction of the complex ecosystem, favoritism of agricultural or chemical oligopolies at the expense of local farmers or workers, and more. In no case can science violate the innate dignity of any person, including an unborn baby. (*Care for Our Common Home*, National Center for the Laity, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$12)

Genetic experiments with poultry hold potential for developing regions, writes Jacob Bunge. “Protein is an essential component of the human diet... [It provides] cells with amino acids that the body can’t produce itself... Nuts and vegetables can supply some of those amino acids, but animal-based proteins typically deliver all of them.” Thus scientists and food companies want a chicken that grows fat in shorter time, has a strong immune system and thrives in the climates of the developing world. Paul Siegel (Virginia Tech, 3470 Litton Reaves Hall, Blacksburg, VA 24061) is among those who raise lots of chickens and collect genetic data about them.

Part of the challenge for Siegel and others, Bunge continues, is breeding a hearty chicken while respecting “other social priorities.” For example, companies are tempted to take away land used for grain and vegetables, replacing those acres with massive feed lots for gluttonous chickens. So can there be a plump chicken that eats modestly, whose feed does not require excessive fertilizer or water or harmful pesticides? Can the chickens be raised in friendly quarters or even in free-range style? Can they grow and provide safe food without massive antibiotics? (*Wall St. Journal*, 12/6/15)

Plus, Francis would add one more moral test: Will food production build upon “a correct understanding of work”? Each worker, says Catholicism, is a *subject* of the work process, not merely a line item called *labor costs*.

Currently in the U.S. the average yearly wage for a poultry worker is about \$26,100. They do not stay long with the same employer. The annual turnover rate is 100%, according to National Center for Farmworker Health (1770 FM 967, Buda, TX 78610; [www.ncfh.org](http://www.ncfh.org)).

The most “vulnerable and exploited workers in the U.S.” are involved with poultry processing, says a new campaign from Oxfam America (1101 17<sup>th</sup> St., NW #1300, Washington, DC 20036; [www.oxfamamerica.org](http://www.oxfamamerica.org)). Speeds are too fast, injuries are sometimes not reported and wages are insufficient for family life. Oxfam

specifically says Sanderson Farms, Pilgrim’s, Tyson and Perdue must improve.

The major companies disagree with Oxfam. The Oxfam criticism, *Lives on the Line* (<http://bit.ly/poultryreport>), is “undeserved,” replies the National Chicken Council (1152 15<sup>th</sup> St. NW #430, Washington, DC 20005). Perdue Farms (31149 Old Ocean City Rd., Salisbury, MD 21804) says it is “a leader in worker safety.” Tyson Foods (2200 W. Tyson Pkwy., Springdale, AR 72762) says minimum hourly pay will increase to \$10 at 40 of its U.S. plants. (*Chicago Tribune*, 10/30/15)

John Funciello says the Oxfam report is worth reading. But Oxfam is naïve. Consumer pressure alone will not guarantee humane work conditions in poultry factories. He suggests “forming a union.” (*Solidarity Notes* [12/15], 33 Central Ave., Albany, NY 12210)

## **Taking the Initiative** *In the Fields*

The virtue of social justice is like-minded people acting to improve an institution. (See *What Is Social Justice?*, NCL, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$4.) The Catholic moral textbooks from the old days (and the cluttered attic office of INITIATIVES has about a dozen of them) give this example to illustrate the virtue: Conditions on the job are not right. Maybe there is needless danger, or maybe pay is not up to a family wage. The moral remedy, the old textbooks say, is to form a union.

This old example might still be an exercise of the virtue. Forming a union, however, is difficult in the U.S. The Coalition of Immokalee Workers (PO Box 603, Immokalee, FL 34143; [www.ciw-online.org](http://www.ciw-online.org)) is an alternative. CIW is not a union and thus cannot do everything a bona fide union can; but it maneuvers in new ways.

First, CIW helps workers with legal referrals, social services and hears their complaints.

CIW then brokers multiple food interests: restaurant patrons, growers, farm workers and supermarket or restaurant chains. One-by-one CIW cajoles a major food outlet to join its Fair Food Program. That means the outlet does business only with growers that are Fair Food certified. The farm workers get a couple of pennies increase for picking a bushel of tomatoes plus they have no harassment on the job. Many

outlets are now Fair Food, including Burger King, Taco Bell, Subway and several more.

Nelson Peltz (Triant Partners, 280 Park Ave., New York, NY 10017) is an activist investor. He has been involved in the food industry since his college days. He has a good reputation in several circles. Peltz is also the board chair of Wendy's (1 Dave Thomas Blvd., Dublin, OH 43017). Wendy's, it so happens, is resisting the Fair Food campaign. The social justice step thus becomes like-minded people getting together at their school or in their community to pressure Peltz and Wendy's into joining the Fair Food program.

## **Taking the Initiative**

### *With Fruit*

A banana worker in Latin America is paid about \$3 per day, unless the worker is in a union. Then the pay is about \$10 per day plus some benefits. Four companies (Chiquita, Del Monte, Dole and Bonita) sell most of the bananas in the U.S. Over the years each company has responded to a specific worker dignity campaign, often involving one or more contract growers or import companies.

Make Fruit Fair (42-58 Saint George St., Norwich, Norfolk NR3 1AB, England; [www.makefruitfair.org](http://www.makefruitfair.org)), a coalition of 17 international groups, monitors the treatment of workers and lobbies specific companies regarding toxic chemicals, arbitrary hiring and firing and inadequate wages.

Ananas Export, aka Anexco (2 KM Oeste, Plaza de Deportes, Alajuela, Costa Rica) deals with a banana workers union. However, Anexco does not give similar treatment to its pineapple workers. Thus, Make Fruit Fair has a campaign on behalf of the pineapple workers. In the U.S. contact International Labor Rights Forum (1634 I St. NW #1001, Washington, DC 20006; [www.laborrights.org](http://www.laborrights.org)) about the campaign.

Meanwhile, Familias Unidas por la Justicia (PO Box 1206, Burlington, WA 98233; [www.boycottsakumaberries.com](http://www.boycottsakumaberries.com)) is sponsoring a boycott of Sakuma Brothers Farms (17400 Cook Rd., Burlington, WA 98233). Familias Unidas wants Sakuma to recognize it as an independent union representing berry pickers. Customers encounter Sakuma's fruit in products from Driscoll Berries (PO Box 50045, Watsonville, CA 95077) and in some flavors of Haagen-Dazs ice cream.

National Farm Worker Ministry (PO Box 10645, Raleigh, NC 27605; [www.nfwm.org](http://www.nfwm.org)), which publishes an informative newsletter, supports the Sakuma boycott.

Like Cesar Chavez (1927-1993) in days gone by, Familias Unidas has a difficult organizing assignment: uniting workers who frequently are seasonally employed and who are not covered under some labor laws.

Real world morality often involves making ambiguous decisions. Chavez decided to serve those workers with longer-term U.S. residency while opposing the arrival of temporary workers from Mexico. Familias Unidas makes the same distinction.

Shortly after the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, the U.S. government began the bracero program through which agriculture companies and the railroads were allowed to sponsor temporary immigrant workers, mostly from Mexico. The program's rationale was an expected wartime shortage of U.S. workers for those industries.

Community Service Organization hired Chavez as an organizer in 1954. His approach was to build a CSO chapter in one or another town by responding to social service or legal problems. While still with CSO, Chavez drew upon an idea from farm worker pioneer Ernesto Galarza (1905-1984) to frame a broader issue: End the bracero program. CSO made the case that the Mexican nationals (192,000 in the program's peak year) were taking jobs away from citizens, Mexican-Americans, Pilipino-Americans and others. Chavez continued this anti-bracero campaign when he switched his organizing from CSO's town residents to farm workers; when he changed from a civic model to a union model. However, the bracero program continued. Only in 1964—some years after World War II—did Congress end the program.

The food industry still brings about 60,000 guest workers to our country each year. An employer can request a H-2A visa for those workers. The employer must meet requirements about prevailing labor supply, wages, housing and more.

Familias Unidas says Sakuma and other fruit growers should not be allowed to use guest workers during a labor dispute or allowed to use them at all if local people seek the agricultural jobs. (*The Nation* [5/2/14], 33 Irving Pl., New York, NY 10003 and *The Right To Stay Home: How U.S. Policy Drives Mexican Migration* by David Bacon, Beacon Press [2014], 24 Fransworth St., Boston, MA 02210; \$20 and *The*

*Crusades of Cesar Chavez* by Miriam Pawwel, Bloomsbury Press [2014], 1385 Broadway, New York, NY 10018; \$22)

## **Taking the Initiative** *In Restaurant Management*

People in our country feel obliged to tip waiters and waitresses even though, writes Corby Kummer, it “is a ridiculous, antiquated system that almost never does what diners think it does.” Thus it was news when Union Square Hospitality Group (24 Union Square E. #600, New York, NY 10003), which runs 13 well-known Manhattan restaurants, eliminated tips. Those restaurants join a growing movement including Ivar’s (1501 Western Ave. #600, Seattle, WA 98101), Alinea (1723 N. Halsted St., Chicago, IL 60614), Walrus & Carpenter (4743 Ballard Ave. NW, Seattle, WA 98107) plus others in those cities and elsewhere. Some of the no-tip restaurants put a surcharge on the bill, while most, including Union Square, raise prices.

Everyone does everything for multiple motives. These no-tip restaurant owners are motivated by a sense of fairness. For example, the owners are uncomfortable when a younger female server gets big tips and an older one is shortchanged. But the owners are also motivated by their desire to attract and retain the best staff, particularly cooks. To understand the owners’ thinking requires some basics in restaurant labor law. By federal policy, restaurant servers are in a *subminimum wage* category; specifically \$2.13 per hour. Some states have a higher subminimum wage. New York, for example, just raised it to \$7.50 per hour. The IRS presumes tips will boost a server’s pay to at least the regular minimum (currently \$7.25 federal; higher in some states; \$15 proposed in New York). In some restaurants and bars a server can exceed the regular minimum. Many, however, will earn less. In any case, cooks and others are paid a set wage.

There is then a second wrinkle for an owner’s consideration. By law, *front of the house* servers are not allowed to give part of the tip pool or part of their own tips to *back of the house* workers like cooks and dishwashers. Servers know how to get around this law, but are under no obligation to subsidize the others, though some feel morally obliged.

Saru Jayaraman of Restaurant Opportunities Center (275 Seventh Ave. #1730, New York, NY 10001; [www.rocunited.org](http://www.rocunited.org))

favors the end of the “two-tiered wage system” created by tips, provided a family wage is the norm. “Most tipped workers,” she writes, are women in chain restaurants. They do not necessarily get big tips and often are not given 40 hours of work per week.

Labor is a significant portion of restaurant costs and thus any increase in wages likely means an increase in prices. Diners should, however, be wary of any large markup. Several industry experts say a well-managed restaurant can handle some wage increase with a modest price increase. (*The New Republic* [2/16], 1620 L St. NW, Washington, DC 20036 plus *N.Y. Times*, 8/24/15 & 10/15/15 & 10/16/15 & 12/3/15 plus *Chicago Tribune*, 10/19/15 plus *Forked: A New Standard for Dining* by Saru Jayaraman, Oxford University Press [2016], 2001 Evans Rd., Cary, NC 27513; \$24.95)

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## **125 Years** *Of Catholic Social Thought*

The U.S. Catholic Bishops have published the latest edition of their election guide, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* (USCCB, 3211 Fourth St. NE, Washington, DC 20017; [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)). The booklet (over 75 pages in one edition) rightly puts Catholic teaching behind a slate of issues: concern for immigrants, no to euthanasia, attention to the environment, opposition to abortion and support for workers choosing a union, plus opposition to the death penalty and others.

As in previous election cycles, INITIATIVES questions the usefulness of the bishops’ booklet. The bishops say they should not tell lay people “for whom or against whom to vote.” Then why such a booklet geared to an election?

The bishops are fond of an abstract term from moral theology: *intrinsically evil act*. They use this technical term a dozen times, implying that it means *really bad behavior*. The bishops escort the term along an express line right into the neighborhood voting booth. A “faithful citizenship” voter is thereby boxed into a corner. The choices inside the booth are not abstract moral categories but actual parties and candidates. What to do? According to the bishops, a faithful citizen might take “the extraordinary step of not voting” or voting for a candidate “less likely to advance such a morally flawed position.” Why “less likely”? Will a

candidate holding flawed positions be stymied by a Congress full of people with superior positions? Or is that flawed candidate “less likely” because they have no chance to win?

The bishops, of course, have a duty to teach morality. Unfortunately, the *Faithful Citizenship* booklet causes more confusion than thoughtfulness. Maybe lay people would better benefit from learning about an officeholder who took Catholic political philosophy seriously.

In this regard INITIATIVES recommends *American Burke: the Uncommon Liberalism of Daniel Patrick Moynihan* by Greg Weiner (University Press of Kansas [2015], 2502 Westbrooke Cr., Lawrence, KS 66045; \$27.95). Moynihan (1927-2003) was a four-term U.S. senator and a staff person to four presidents--two Democrats and two Republicans. The *Burke* in Weiner’s title is Edmund Burke (1729-1797) who served as a distinguished Member of Parliament.

Moynihan was a New Deal liberal who believed that government can address social problems through distribution mechanisms like Social Security or Medicare. He parted ways, however, with those post-John Kennedy liberals who favor targeted government programs. Moynihan, as Weiner writes, thought government is “incompetent [at] providing services at ever more microscopic levels.”

Moynihan continually drew upon the Catholic *principle of subsidiarity*. It means, says Weiner, that “decisions should be made as close as possible to the individual in order to preserve the initiative, identity and dignity of individuals and the institutions that surround them.” Subsidiarity is not laissez-faire. It sees a

“constructive role for government...but resists statist solutions.”

According to Weiner, this Catholic principle allows a person in an intermediate community like an ethnic club, a parish or a union local to be “ultimately attached to the wider society,” more profoundly than an individual making unattached choices. Without subsidiarity big government or big business rubs directly against individuals. The result “is a faceless and vacuous relationship given to dependence [and] vulnerability.”

Moynihan wanted government policies that supported families and other local institutions. For example, he wanted a line for charity deduction on the 1040-EZ because many families that give to neighborhood non-profits don’t use the long form. He wanted a deduction for money spent on parochial education. Moynihan favored a guaranteed income linked to work. As early as 1964, he pushed for a *family allowance* to help all families raise children.

Some of today’s politicians want the government to get out of the market’s way. Others want government to administer grand programs. All our political leaders say they champion individuals. But one political faction leaves those individuals unprotected in the economic realm. The other faction leaves individuals unprotected in lifestyle realms.

It is the rare political leader who is pro-government, yet who simultaneously realizes that neither government nor big business can alone deliver solutions. It is the rare leader who acts on the principle that individuals are truly free only when embedded in the give-and-take of many local communities.

## Resources

Last year Frank Ardito wrote about his 1950s experience as a leader in the Young Christian Workers movement. The book is titled *The YCW I Remember* (National Center for the Laity, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$10). Now Ardito tells about his time in the 1960s as an outreach worker to young people in Chicago’s Englewood and West Town neighborhoods. His account is titled *The Street Sweeper* (Vesuvius Press, 4727 N. 12<sup>th</sup> St., Phoenix, AZ 85014; \$14.95). The neighborhoods of that era seem uncannily similar to the situation today: competing gangs, drugs and general urban decay.

In 1980 the Center of Concern (1225 Otis St. NE, Washington, DC 20017; [www.coc.org](http://www.coc.org)) published *Social Analysis* by Joe Holland and Fr. Peter Henriot, SJ. Several revised editions and some spinoffs followed. Most recently there is *Social Analysis for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* by Sr. Maria Cimperman, RSCJ (Orbis Books [2015], PO Box 302, Maryknoll, NY 10545; \$24). Henriot writes its foreword.

Meanwhile, Holland sent INITIATIVES a Christmas present: titles from Pax Romana (1025 Connecticut Ave. NW #1000, Washington, DC 20036; [www.paceminterris.net](http://www.paceminterris.net)). The present includes Holland’s latest booklet *Peter Maurin’s Ecological Lay New Monasticism* and from 2012 there is his *100 Years of Catholic Social Teaching Defending Workers & Their Unions*.

Fr. Kevin McKenna (Cathedral Community, 296 Flower City Park, Rochester, NY 14615) also sent INITIATIVES a Christmas present: *Praying in Mission & Ministry*. The booklet names “the seven themes of social justice.” Each is developed with a Scripture passage, a reflection and short prayer. McKenna, in addition to his duties as a canon lawyer and urban pastor, has written several Catholic guides, including a revised edition to the popular *Concise Guide to Catholic Social Teaching* (Ave Maria, PO Box 428, Notre Dame, IN 46556; \$16.95).

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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](mailto:wdroel@cs.com)).

A cyber-version of INITIATIVES appears at [www.catholiclabor.org/NCL.htm](http://www.catholiclabor.org/NCL.htm), thanks to Fr. Sinclair Oubre of the Catholic Labor Network.

*The Working Catholic* blog appears on Patheos ([www.patheos.com/blogs/workingcatholic](http://www.patheos.com/blogs/workingcatholic)) and on two cyber-sites maintained in the Midwest: *Catholic Labor Network* ([www.catholiclabor.com](http://www.catholiclabor.com)) and *Faith and Labor Movement* ([www.faithandlabor.blogspot.com](http://www.faithandlabor.blogspot.com)). There are also a handful of posts on *Democratic Faith* ([www.democraticfaith.com](http://www.democraticfaith.com)).

## Readers Respond

National Center for the Laity appreciates the donations you made toward our 2016 budget. (NCL’s budget can still use an additional \$3,000. See a donation opportunity on page eight.)

The many notes enclosed with your donations are encouraging.

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“I find INITIATIVES really valuable.” –from Arizona

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- 2.) Clippings related to faith and work from your church bulletin, local newspaper or a cyber-site;
- 3.) Prayers for the church (the people) at work in the world and for our National Center.

Vatican II brought “a new way of looking at the vocation and the mission of lay people in the church and in the world... Lay people [are no longer] *second class* members at the service of the hierarchy... But [they are] disciples of Christ who, by force of their baptism and their nature inserted *in the world*, are called to animate every space, every activity, every human relation according to the spirit of the gospel.” –Pope Francis in a letter creating a new Vatican committee for laity and family life, 11/15.