

Initiatives

In Support of Christians in the World

National Center for the Laity
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50 Years since Vatican II

Until December 2015, the 50th anniversary of Vatican II's (1962-1965) formal closing, INITIATIVES will profile the Council's antecedents and its continuing implementation. In this issue INITIATIVES highlights the Catholic Labor Alliance (later called Catholic Council on Working Life), a 1940s Chicago group.

In an old article for *Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Magazine* (5/49) Bob Senser tells the CLA story. "Considered by itself," he writes, "CLA has no national significance." It is, however, part of an important movement that considers laity as the first apostles on the front line of the church's mission. Senser notes that other similar organizations share an office with CLA at 3 E. Chicago Ave., including Young Christian Workers and Young Christian Students.

CLA, founded in 1943, is a direct predecessor organization to our National Center for the Laity because Msgr. Dan Cantwell (1915-1996) and Ed Marciniak (1917-2004), who were NCL founders in 1978, founded CLA. Marciniak edited its newspaper, *Work*. When CLA was called CCWL, its publication was *New City*. INITIATIVES is thus descended from *Work* and *New City*.

After the first issue of *Work* hit the factory gates, a worker wrote to CLA:

Where were you in the late 1930s when things were tough? It's all right to jump on the bandwagon now, but I'd think more of you people if you had been around a few years ago with steelworkers and packinghouse workers in Chicago's Back of the Yards.

Marciniak wrote back: "In 1938 when the big drive was on, I was riding in a police patrol wagon. Along with a few others, I was picked up for distributing literature for the Packinghouse Workers Organizing Committee outside a stockyard entrance. If that was a bandwagon, I was on it." Marciniak, keep in mind, was 20 years old in that paddy wagon.

In addition to *Work*, Senser names other CLA activities: A monthly newsletter,

Grapevine, for its 190 leaders, a weekly labor class at the Sheil School of Social Studies, speakers for parish groups, lobbying for fair employment laws and more. CLA was sometimes criticized for not being "anti" enough. NCL gets the same criticism; some people want to know what NCL is *against*. In CLA's case it was not *anti-communist enough*, according to some. The CLA response was to say that communism is evil, but to also note that the church does not therefore endorse 1940s-style capitalism (or 21st century-style capitalism). Second, CLA pointed out that it is easy to call communists nasty names, but CLA's mission is to be pro-life, upholding the dignity of body and soul, of labor and the family and to agitate for a social order that supports dignity.

Today by the way, Senser edits an informative cyber-newsletter, *Human Rights for Workers*

(www.humanrightsforworkers.blogspot.com)

and writes for INITIATIVES. Future editions of INITIATIVES will mention other groups (past and present) that exemplify the Chicago-Way-of-Being-Catholic, a style consonant with Vatican II's model of a lay-centered church in service to the modern world.

Taking the Initiative

Making Saints

Some champions of the laity are becoming formal saints.

Cardinal John Henry Newman (1801-1890) of England was ordained Anglican and then in 1845 became Catholic. Of particular interest to the National Center for the Laity is Newman's essay *On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine* (Rowman & Littlefield [1859], 4501 Forbes Blvd. #200, Lanham, MD 20706; \$12.95).

To be clear, Newman did not believe that the church is a democracy in the sense that dogma is subject to popular vote. Nor does NCL. The magisterium, not the laity, is responsible for clarifying dogma. However, the church's understanding of doctrine develops as all its

members consult one another, as they breathe the Spirit of God together.

Newman had edited only one edition (May 1859) of a journal, *The Rambler*. That was enough, writes Bob McClory, for the local Catholic bishop to say that Newman “had erred seriously in trying to rouse the laity on a question already decided.” (*The Rambler* article was about a government commission on the quality of schools; seemingly not a topic of high dogma.) The laity is a “peaceable set,” the bishop told Newman in a meeting. A docile laity is not good for the church, Newman replied. “Who are the laity?” the bishop sarcastically asked. To which Newman famously said: “The church would look foolish without them.” (*Faithful Dissenters*, Orbis Books [2000], PO Box 308, Maryknoll, NY 10545; \$16)

The bishop concluded the meeting, telling Newman to resign from *The Rambler* after its July edition. Newman obeyed but he devoted his last issue in its entirety to *On Consulting the Faithful*. The essay, explains C. Colt Anderson, used history “to champion the cause of doctrinal development, intellectual freedom, freedom of conscience and the active role of the laity in the church.” Specifically, Newman drew attention to Arianism, a fourth century heresy that denied the divinity of Jesus. Many bishops at the time got it wrong, Newman notes. The true Trinitarian dogma was preserved by the laity. (*The Great Catholic Reformers*, Paulist Press [2007], 997 Macarthur Blvd., Mahwah, NJ 07430; \$29.95)

Newman’s critics said he was infecting Catholicism with his Protestant leanings. Msgr. George Talbot, then a papal advisor, claimed Newman wanted laity “as the rulers of the Catholic church in England instead of the Holy See and the Episcopate.” After all, wrote Talbot: “What is the province of the laity? To hunt, to shoot, to entertain. These matters they understand, but to meddle with ecclesiastical matters they have no right at all... [This] Dr. Newman is the most dangerous man in England.” (*Catholic Laity in the Mission of the Church* by Russell Shaw, Requiem Press [2005], PO Box 7, Bethune, SC 29009; \$14.95)

Fr. Jerzy Popieluszko (1947-1984), who was martyred by secret agents of the Polish Ministry of Internal Affairs for his strong anti-communism and his support of workers, particularly the Solidarity movement, was declared a martyr saint as INITIATIVES goes to press. The witness of Popieluszko hastened the overthrow of the communist block.

The National Center for the Laity was quite taken by pictures from Popieluszko’s funeral where the mourners came dressed in their occupational garb—doctors in lab jackets, steelworkers and miners wearing tool belts, farmers and shopkeepers in overalls, and more. But why not? They had come to offer bread and wine, “the work of human hands,” in tribute to a hero of workers.

A Popieluszko biography, *The Priest and the Policeman* by John Moody & Roger Boyes, is out-of-print as is *Reasons of State: To Kill A Polish Priest* by Kevin Ruane. A 1989 movie, *To Kill A Priest* directed by Agnieszka Holland, is available.

INITIATIVES knows of three shrines to Popieluszko in the U.S.: At St. Hyacinth Basilica (3636 W. Wolfram St., Chicago, IL 60618); at St. Hedwig (872 Brunswick Ave., Trenton, NJ 08638); and Fr. Popieluszko Square, part of New York City Park Department, in the Greenpoint neighborhood of Brooklyn (between Nassau Ave. & Bedford Ave. at 12th St.).

Popieluszko’s countryman, Pope John Paul II (1920-2005), moves into the on-deck circle of saint-making as INITIATIVES goes to press. The pontiff’s thoughts on the laity at work in the world are summarized in *Pope John Paul II’s Gospel of Work* by Bill Droel (National Center for the Laity, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$8).

“The Vatican needs to recognize more lay saints, both single and married,” says *America* (106 W. 56th St., New York, NY 10019; 12/14/09). While applauding Newman and Popieluszko and John Paul II, INITIATIVES agrees. *America* recommends Catherine de Hueck Doherty (1896-1985) plus Jacques (1882-1973) and Raissa Maritain (1883-1960). The National Center for the Laity (PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629) continues to accept nominations for canonization. The NCL rules are: The person or couple must have lived in North America; they were not Church employees. Send NCL the names and description of your candidates.

Taking the Initiative *Among Business Students*

Over 1,400 recent MBA graduates have signed the MBA Oath (www.mba oath.org), pledging to avoid “decisions and behavior that advance my own narrow ambitions but harm the enterprise and the societies it serves.” Begun at

Harvard Business School (Soldiers Field Rd., Cambridge, MA 02138; www.hbs.edu), the oath is now established at Columbia Business School (3022 Broadway, New York, NY 10027; www.gsb.columbia.edu), Thunderbird School of Global Management (1 Global Pl., Glendale, AZ 85306; www.thunderbird.edu) and other schools. Some executives have begun noting the oath when they hire recent graduates.

Critics of the movement (Yes, there are plenty of them.) say a personal oath means little in an economy where even laws and regulations don't stop financial immorality; it sounds good but the graduates won't follow through. Other critics say the oath could offer a false solution; that the problem is not knowledge of right and wrong, but narrow, irresponsible behavior in a complex market. (*Christian Science Monitor* [9/27/09], 210 Massachusetts Ave., Boston, MA 02115)

Taking the Initiative *Against Sweatshops*

"Nearly 20 years of anti-sweatshop activism has come to naught," contends Jeff Ballinger (Press for Change, 1415 Hyde Park Ave. #3, Hyde Park, MA 02136). The positive agreements that U.S. students and others gained from apparel importers are not enforced overseas and the activist groups in the U.S. are too fragmented to coordinate accurate information, he says. (*Dissent* [Summer/09], University of Pennsylvania Press, 3905 Spruce St., Philadelphia, PA 19104)

Ken Silverstein goes behind the scene in Cambodia and fleshes out Ballinger's observation. A few years ago Cambodia reached accord with the International Labor Organization and signed some trade agreements. Its apparel industry was recently praised by President Bill Clinton. But while things look good on paper, in reality it is "image enhancement" and a "coat of whitewash," says Silverstein.

He quotes Scott Nova (Worker Rights Consortium, 5 Thomas Cr. NW, Washington, DC 20005; www.workersrights.org): "The factories can take some modest steps on labor conditions, but one thing they cannot do is raise wages because that causes the whole [sweatshop] model to collapse." The whole industry "would vanish in a matter of months," if there was a legal minimum wage and genuine collective bargaining. (*Harper's* [1/10], 666 Broadway, New York, NY 10012)

Silverstein's report should not lead to total agreement with Ballinger's pessimistic assessment nor should Christians and others in this country abandon the anti-sweatshop cause.

Sweatfree Communities (30 Blackstone St., Bangor, ME 04401; www.sweatfree.org) held a summit in November for several organizations. A promising tactic involves amending government procurement policies to eliminate sweatshop goods and create a market for decent products. Sweatshop Communities already has 39 municipalities and over 100 public school districts on board.

For example, Mayor Sam Adams (City Hall, 1221 SW Fourth Ave. #340, Portland, OR 97204) recently hosted a celebration marking his city's one-year participation in sweat-free purchasing. The party featured paintings by Janet Essley (PO Box 930, White Salmon, WA 98672; www.w3.gorge.net/essmoy), part of her traveling exhibit that puts "a human face to the workers behind the uniforms of public employees."

Several groups, including Catholic Relief Service and Georgetown University Law School, are involved with Sweatshop Communities. Together the groups are called Sweatshop Purchasing Consortium (www.buysweatfree.org). The website, among other information, has a Conscience Consumer Guide for ordinary shoppers. (*Human Rights for Workers* [7/4/09 & 11/11/09 & 12/14/09], www.humanrightsforworkers.blogspot.com)

Taking the Initiative *With Investments*

There are wrinkles regarding ethical investing. To screen out an investment because of a company's undesirable product or service is always selective; other companies in one's portfolio might be undesirable to another equally moral investor. Further, explains Fr. Louis Sirianni (St. Mark, 54 Kuhn Rd., Greece, NY 14612), a stockholder in an undesirable company could lobby management for improvements and could vote on reform resolutions at annual meetings. Finally, it all gets complicated when a so-called *pure investment* is a loser and an investment made only to leverage reform suddenly takes off financially. (*Catholic Courier*, 11/09)

Nonetheless, writes Doug Demeo (St. Peter's College, 2641 Kennedy Blvd., Jersey City, NJ 07306), "the recent economic meltdown offers fresh opportunity to examine [ethical or]

Catholic investment strategies” because it forces people to think about *long term value* more comprehensively. Further, financial strength is coming to be seen as closely related to social responsibility. On this point Demeo mentions *Investing in a Sustainable World* by Matthew Kiernan (Amacom Books [2008], 600 Ama Way, Saranac Lake, NY 12983; \$27.95). (*America* [10/26/09], 106 W. 56th St., New York, NY 10019)

As an alternative to investing in stocks, some local banks and some development corporations have funds targeted to, for example, moderate-income housing or environmental job creation. RSF Social Finance (1002A O’Reilly Ave., San Francisco, CA 94129) is pioneering a three-month, interest-bearing CD for a minimum of \$1,000. RSF uses all the \$1,000s to make loans to nonprofits. Kiva (www.kiva.org) offers cyber-accounts for a minimum of \$25. Through field partners in Africa, Asia, Latin America and even the U.S., Kiva provides loans to small shops and local entrepreneurs. (*Christian Science Monitor* [11/1/09], 210 Massachusetts Ave., Boston, MA 02115 and *Trinity News* [12/09], 74 Trinity Pl., New York, NY 10006)

Taking the Initiative In Seminary

The School of Theology (University of the South, 735 University Ave., Sewanee, TN 37383) recently conducted an intensive weekend for-credit workshop on “Connecting Evangelism and Conversion with Ministry in Daily Life.” In addition to lectures, reading and discussion, students met one-on-one with ordinary parishioners to discuss: “Where in daily life are you called into action by God?” Presenters included Rev. Wayne Schwab (Member Mission, 10 Jubert Ln., Plattsburg, NY 12901; www.membermission.org).

INITIATIVES peruses seminary catalogs. Although some entries pertain to lay ministry inside the Church, there is no recent offering on laity in the world or on theology of work. Please alert INITIATIVES to any such courses or seminars.

Work and Art

“Throughout the [current] recession,” writes Julia Baird, “the well-off have not just received most of our attention, but also most of our aid. [Meanwhile] poor people appear in the

mainstream media only when they are obese, sick or sad: powerless and to be pitied.” Images were different during the Depression, Baird continues, because blame pointed directly toward “financial mismanagement,” not at poor people.

Specifically, says Baird, Dorothea Lange (1895-1965) shot hundreds of widely syndicated photos of migrants, orphans and unemployed workers. By showing the courage of her subjects, “Lange restored dignity to the dispossessed during the Great Depression.” (*Newsweek*, 11/16/09)

Lange’s photos, including the famous 1936 *Migrant Mother*, are discussed in two new books: *Dorothea Lange: A Life Beyond Limits* by Linda Gordon (W.W. Norton [2009], 500 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10110; \$35) and *Daring to Look: Dorothea Lange’s Photographs and Reports from the Field* by Anne Whiston Spirn (University of Chicago Press [2009], 1427 E. 60th St., Chicago, IL 60637; \$30).

“I made five exposures, working closer and closer from the same direction,” Lange says of *Migrant Mother*, which is still displayed at anti-poverty rallies. The woman in the picture, Florence Owens, told me “they had been living on frozen vegetables from the surrounding fields, and on birds that the children killed. She had just sold tires from her car to buy food.”

Barbara Ehrenreich also senses a contrast between depiction of the poor during the Depression and today. In the current downturn workers are told to think positively, to change their attitude and work harder, she says in *Bright-Sided* (Henry Holt [2009], 175 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010; \$23). It is a subtle way to blame them for their plight. Instead, workers should be considered with dignity. People need to remember, she writes, that poverty is not usually a voluntary condition.

Maybe sympathetic artists can point the way to a realistic image of our unemployed and under-employed.

The Great Workbench

Soul or *soul-making* has somehow gotten loose from ecclesiastical circles and found a home in the realm of ordinary work. That’s one explanation for the immense popularity of *Shop Craft as Soulcraft: An Inquiry into the Value of Work* by Matthew Crawford (Penguin Press [2009], 375 Hudson St., New York, NY 10014; \$25.95).

Crawford laments how high schools have abandoned shop classes in favor of computer labs, thinking all good things come to those who qualify to enter college and “mind work.” Instead, he argues for a character-building (and hence soul-building) experience one finds by solving the problems and delights of manual labor. People with the patience and persistence to raise vegetables in tight urban confines, or keep chickens in backyards, or who like to fix their own cars, get a satisfaction and usefulness many more of us once knew before we depended on so many devices (cell phones, computers, microwaves, digital cameras, etc.) whose inner workings are a complete and magical mystery. Crawford argues that people who work in the trades (mechanics, carpenters, gardeners, etc.) have an advantage over the rest of us for vitality of soul.

A similar argument comes from philosopher Albert Borgmann, whose *Technology and the Character of Everyday Life* (University of Chicago Press [1984], 1427 E. 60th St., Chicago, IL 60637; \$28) remarks about the perils of a “device paradigm,” where life’s fabric is woven over with technology. Moving over into theology, Borgmann argues in *Power Failure: Christianity in the Culture of Technology* (Baker Publishing [2003], 6030 E. Fulton Rd., Ada, MI 49301; \$16) that we are increasingly part of a “device paradigm” society, in awe of technological gadgets stimulating hyperactivity and hyper-reality. Like Crawford, Borgmann calls for a simpler life where tools and manual applications require skills and a familiarity not found by pushing a button. He connects his recommendation to Christian living.

Instead of *soul* or *soul-making*, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi uses the term *flow* in his section of *Good Work: When Excellence and Ethics Meet* (Basic Books [2001], 10 E. 53rd St., New York, NY 10022; \$17.50). What he means is the confidence one gains by performing a physical action that requires skill and practice. He uses an example that would bring joy to Crawford and Borgmann, citing a passage in *Anna Karenina* by Leo Tolstoy (B & N Classic [1875], 122 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10011; \$8.95). Levin, a wealthy Russian land owner, puzzles his landed-gentry friends by insisting on learning to wield a scythe with his peasant employees in a hay field. Tolstoy beautifully describes Levin’s struggles in keeping up with the others, but also Levin’s satisfaction in getting the knack of scything and

knowing the joys of noontime and evening repast, rest, and accomplishment.

But for excellent prose that describes the beauty of the *opus manum*, the work of our hands, its closeness to creation and harmony in this sort of soul-making, *The Wheelwright’s Shop* by George Sturt (Cambridge University Press [1923], 32 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10013; \$27.99) is probably the best. Sturt was a wheel and wagon maker. His shop in a small agrarian village served farmers around the English countryside, just prior to the time when purpose-built machinery overtook a lot of the old handcrafted production and repair.

North American Spirituality

Msgr. John O’Grady (1887-1966)

This year Catholic Charities (66 Canal Center Plaza #600, Alexandria, VA 22314) celebrates its 100th anniversary in the U.S. O’Grady was its executive secretary from 1920-1961. He positioned Catholic Charities on the cutting edge of programs and advocacy on behalf of veterans, seniors, migrants, juvenile delinquents, displaced persons and industrial workers.

O’Grady came from County Clare to Omaha as an associate pastor in 1909. He soon began graduate studies at Catholic University and subsequently at John Hopkins University and the University of Chicago. He was involved with Catholic Charities as early as 1912, organizing its national conference, editing its magazine and conducting field research about veterans and their families in the Midwest.

As its director, O’Grady encouraged Catholic Charities’ employees to have college degrees and continuing education. He introduced the concept of *family casework*. He put lay employees in key positions, moving clergy to boards and advisory posts. The number of regional headquarters grew from six to 140 under his leadership.

O’Grady served on commissions for several presidents. He frequently testified to Congress. He persisted in starting local projects: for juvenile delinquents on the Lower East Side, for people displaced during World War II, for migrants in California (befriending Cesar Chavez as early as 1954) and more. He was (with reservations about its bureaucracy) a fan of the New Deal; in fact O’Grady among others is credited with formulating the Social Security Act.

Along the way O'Grady met Msgr. Jack Egan (1916-2001) of Chicago through their involvement in Young Christian Students. Egan introduced O'Grady to some YCS members who were organizing Puerto Ricans in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood. Egan also brought the effort to the attention of Saul Alinsky (1909-1972), who in turn hired those students for his Industrial Areas Foundation (220 W. Kinzie St. #500, Chicago, IL 60610). Meanwhile O'Grady obtained a three-year foundation grant to send IAF organizers to Butte and Lackawanna under the guidance of Montana Catholic Charities and Buffalo Catholic Charities respectively. The Lackawanna project began in 1956 with organizer Nick von Hoffman, formerly of YCS. Ed Chambers, until recently the IAF director, replaced von Hoffman there.

Alinsky remained close to O'Grady and began a biography of him, but later dropped the project. O'Grady's memoirs will be published this year by Catholic University Press (620 Michigan Ave. NE #Leahy 240, Washington, DC 20064).

Happenings

The annual Catholic Social Ministry Gathering (Cynthia Morris Colbert, USCCB, 3211 Fourth St. NE, Washington, DC 20017; www.usccb.org/sdwp) will be February 7-10, 2010 in Washington, DC. It will focus on the encyclical *Love in Truth* by Pope Benedict XVI (National Center for the Laity, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$6).

Our NCL will give away its publications to Gathering participants, including NCL's *Catholic Administrators and Labor Unions*, at a reception hosted by Catholic Labor Network (1500 Jefferson Dr., Port Arthur, TX 77642; www.catholiclabor.org).

The National Pastoral Life Center, formerly the host for the Gathering, recently closed operations. One NPLC program, Common Ground Initiative, is moving to Catholic Theological Union (5401 S. Cornell Ave., Chicago, IL 60615).

"Civilizing the Economy: A New Way of Understanding Business Enterprise" is an April 9, 2010 conference of the Faith and Work Initiative (5 Ivy Ln., Princeton, NJ 08540; www.faihandwork.princeton.edu). The conference is based on the 2009 encyclical *Love in Truth* by Pope Benedict XVI (National Center for the Laity, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$6).

"Social Justice, Social Welfare and the Economy" is a May 21, 2010 conference at DePaul University (990 W. Fullerton St. #137, Chicago, IL 60614; jmurra19@depaul.edu). The conference is dedicated to St. Louise de Marillac, the patron of social workers.

John A. Ryan Institute (2115 Summit Ave., St. Paul, MN 55105; www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies) hosts a conference, "Charismatic Principle in Economic and Civil Life," in Florence, Italy on May 28-29, 2010. Proceedings from an earlier Ryan Institute conference, "The Business of Practical Wisdom," are now on the website.

"Theology and Economics in the 21st Century" is a July 13-16, 2010 conference in Hertfordshire, England sponsored by Modern Churchpeople's Union (1 The Woods, Grotton, Oldham OL4 4LP, England; www.modernchurchunion.org).

Pax Romana (1025 Connecticut Ave. NW #1000, Washington, DC 20036; www.pax-romana-cmica.org) is producing a cyber-study guide for the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*. The first sections are now available, for free. The *Compendium* itself is available from National Center for the Laity (PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$20).

Mark Quinn of Chicago's southwest side is an old friend of our National Center for the Laity. His new book is *Finding God Everyday: Practical Spirituality for Lay People* (Winged Lion [2009], 9411 Pleasant Ave., Chicago, IL 60643; \$15). It has a chapter on "Finding God at Work," and another "God and Mammon." There is a seven-page annotated spiritual reading list that contains many favorites of Catholic laity.