

Initiatives

In Support of Christians in the World

National Center for the Laity
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www.catholiclabor.org/NCL.htm

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Hour of the Laity

"I hereby propose a Year of the Laity," writes Tom Sheridan, longtime friend of our National Center for the Laity. It would be a fitting follow up to the 2009-2010 Year for Priests, as "proclaimed by Pope Benedict XVI," he says.

"The vocation of the laity is overlooked," continues Sheridan. It "is not just about going to Mass, important as that may be. It's not just about doctrine, as vital as that is... Rather, it's about taking the liturgy from the church onto Main Street... It's the laity's vocation to press respect for life and the church's social gospel in a world that too often doesn't want to hear it." (*The Evangelist*, 2/25/10)

NCL is sympathetic to Sheridan's proposal, but NCL is not lobbying for it. That's because NCL suspects that an *official* Year of the Laity might be either superficial or narrowly focused on laity within Church-sanctioned ministries. Instead, NCL hopes for *the hour of the laity*. That is, NCL hopes that the current exhaustion of secular individualism and the current credibility vacuum among our bishops mark a moment in which lay leaders, particularly young adults, carry forth the gospel in all its fullness.

In Western Europe during the 1940s and 1950s several Catholic strategists gave attention to the laity in the world, drawing upon papal documents and the Catholic Action model of Cardinal Joseph Cardijn (1882-1967) of Belgium and others. A handful of NCL leaders are revisiting documents and out-of-print books from that era, looking for contemporary applications. Among the books are Cardijn's *Challenge To Action*, plus *Christian Democracy in Western Europe* by Michael Fogarty, *France Pagan?* by Fr. Henri Godin, CM and *The Role of the Laity in the Church* by Msgr. Gerard Philips.

To be continued...

Taking the Initiative

In the Board Room

It isn't easy for reform-minded investors to change a company's directors and influence management. "But the tide is beginning to turn," reports Tara Siegel Bernard. (*N.Y. Times*, 3/6/10)

Most companies now require that a board candidate get a majority, even counting the non-voting shares. And currently brokers, usually aligned with the status quo, can vote a client's shares without permission. A Shareholder Bill of Rights (S1074), introduced by Senator Charles Schumer (757 Third Ave. #1702, New York, NY 10017; www.schumer.senate.gov), would make it easier for investors to nominate and elect independent directors, giving shareholders a way to address executive pay and other issues.

Some reform-minded investors are slating former CEOs, rather than an inexperienced activist. Of 213 dissident nominees last year, 24% were former top managers, reports Joann Lublin. (*Wall St. Journal*, 4/12/10)

The strategy is to gain other investors' confidence and votes and, upon victory, to be effective in proposing changes. A few retired CEOs are making a hobby out of dissident campaigns, including John Mutch (Beyond Trust, 30401 Agoura Rd. #200, Agoura Hills, CA 91301). A former technology CEO, Mutch has won four campaigns with the intention of improving management.

An individual INITIATIVES' reader can study board elections, company policies and join reform campaigns through Proxy Democracy (RSF Social Finance, 1002A O'Reilly Ave., San Francisco, CA 94129; www.proxydemocracy.org) and Moxy Vote (1800 Bayberry Ct. #103, Richmond, VA 23226; www.moxyvote.com). Institutional investors can join Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility (475 Riverside Dr. #1842, New York, NY 10115; www.iccr.org). More information on this topic from Program on Corporation Law and Democracy (PO Box 246, S. Yarmouth, MA 02664; www.poclad.org) and,

with an environment specialty, from As You Sow (311 California St. #510, San Francisco, CA 94104; www.asyousow.org).

Taking the Initiative *Among Beltway Young Adults*

David O'Brien (University of Dayton, 300 College Pk. #O'Reilly 110, Dayton, OH 45469; obriendj@notes.udayton.edu) is looking for Catholic young adults "working on public policy in the Washington, DC area," perhaps in Congress or with a think tank or with an interest group. O'Brien, who is normally in Massachusetts but now visiting Ohio, wants to "arrange opportunities for networking and mutual support" in the context of Catholic social thought. He already hosted a breakfast at Trinity University (125 Michigan Ave. NE, Washington, DC 20017).

Presuming O'Brien does not have a pre-determined agenda for the network, his initiative is suggestive.

There are plenty of Catholics, including Church employees, who lobby Capitol Hill on behalf of human dignity. But ultimately it is *insiders* to the system that structure justice. And those Catholic insiders, particularly young adults among them, need forums in which to discuss how they translate their faith into the compromises necessary to real life justice and peace.

Fr. William Ferree, SM (1905-1985) spent most of his career at the University of Dayton, where O'Brien is now situated. Before his death, INITIATIVES interviewed Ferree on the distinction between *outsiders* and *insiders*.

"The outsider is often interested in getting things done, but not in knowing how to get things done. It is the insider who organizes institutions to be responsive to people. That is the definition of *social justice*," Ferree says. "An outsider is prone to activist activity. The insider as the agent for social justice is interested in how to structure life."

Ferree's 1948 booklet, *Introduction to Social Justice*, is available through Center for Economic and Social Justice (4218 N. 31st St., Arlington, VA 22207; www.cesj.org), along with other writings.

Taking the Initiative *On Food Prices*

Stop Gambling on Hunger (MOGC, PO Box 29132, Washington, DC 20017; <http://stopgamblingonhunger.com>) is a campaign to limit speculation in commodity markets.

Since the 1930s regulations limited the dollar amount and trading rate for investors in grain and other food futures. The last major limits were, however, lifted in 2000. Now a small number of people can dominate a market and cause food prices to dramatically rise or fall within a matter of three months.

Stop Gambling knows that futures markets are necessary and it realizes that several factors drive up food prices. Yet prices and availability are less stable when a small number of short-term investors corner a rice, corn or wheat market.

Michael Masters (White Knight Research and Trading, 4055 Oak Laurel Way, Atlanta, GA 30004), who studies inflated prices and food shortages, is a resource for the campaign.

Senator Maria Cantwell (915 Second Ave. #3206, Seattle, WA 98174; www.cantwell.senate.gov) has introduced a Derivatives Market Manipulation Act (S1682) to reign in speculation. (*America* [3/8/10], 106 W. 56th St., New York, NY 10019 & *Catholic Courier*, 3/10)

Business leaders sometimes object to government interference. Here is an opportunity for the Mercantile Exchange (20 S. Wacker Dr., Chicago, IL 60606; www.cmegroup.com) and others to institute reforms and make additional government policing unnecessary.

Taking the Initiative *With Underemployment*

All day-to-day employment is marked by "low wages, a high degree of worker alienation, few prospects for upward mobility and a greater degree of exploitation than the labor market as a whole," writes Dick Reavis in *Catching Out: the Secret World of Day Laborers* (Simon & Schuster [2010], 1230 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10020; \$23.99).

In INITIATIVES' neighborhood clumps of workers, many of whom are immigrants, are visibly waiting in the morning for a contractor to hire them for the day. As in *Matthew 20*, their situation depends entirely on the contractor's

virtue. These workers are profiled in *On the Corner: Day Labor in the U.S.* by Nik Theodore et al. (Center for Urban Economic Development, 400 S. Peoria #2100, Chicago, IL 60607; www.urbaneconomy.org).

Reavis, using a participant-observer method, concentrates on day labor agencies or hiring halls where between 800,000 and 2million seek work each day. Some agencies specialize in white-collar employment; some are storefronts for walk-ins; some are managed by an individual with only a cell phone and a spreadsheet.

Reavis' title refers to workers' jargon: To *catch out* means *to be dispatched* to a job. A dispatched worker gets a ticket from the agency's clerk. The employer marks the ticket at the end of a job. The clerk then pays the worker. Some workers might get a weekly ticket from the agency. They report directly to the job site. Most, however, come to the agency as the need arises. Reavis finds that many of these have a character defect, a health problem or are newly unemployed from steady jobs.

Ambiguous legislation from 1971 exempts indirect employers from any responsibility to day laborers or their agencies regarding wages and hours, unemployment security, safety, health insurance and accident liability. Only eight states require hiring halls to be registered. Even though this type of work is ripe for abuse, Reavis says it is probably "less grim" than sidewalk-hiring.

Other new books that profile underemployment include *American Dream Dying: the Changing Economic Lot of the Least Advantaged* by Peter McClelland & Peter Tobin (Rowman & Littlefield [2009], 4501 Forbes Blvd. #200, Lanham, MD 20706; \$32.95) and *Working In the Shadows: Doing the Jobs Most Americans Won't Do* by Gabriel Thompson (Norton Books [2009], 116 E. 16th St. #800, New York, NY 10003; \$24.95).

What can be done? In South Bend, Minneapolis, Milwaukee and elsewhere concerned people have launched non-profit workers' centers. Each approaches the situation differently, but they draw upon the hiring hall model, mixed with tactics from the union movement, the settlement house culture and techniques from job training programs. Each is modest in its reach, relying in part on volunteers. Yet the accomplishments of these centers are suggestive. About 25 of them are listed each month in *Faith Works* (Interfaith Worker Justice (1020 W. Bryn Mawr Ave. #400, Chicago, IL 60660; www.iwj.org).

INITIATIVES' readers can purchase a CD, *Chicago for the People*, which contains a ballad, "Sweet Chariot." Commissioned by Latino Union of Chicago (1619 W. 19th St., Chicago, IL 60608; www.latinounion.org), the song was written by Ami Saraiya and Anna Soltys after they spent several months talking with day laborers on the corner of W. Belmont and N. Milwaukee in Chicago.

The corner was used in the early 1960s by Jewish-American day laborers and is now populated by Mexican-Americans and workers from Eastern European countries. (*Chicago Sun Times*, 4/21/10)

Taking the Initiative *Against Sweatshops*

Sweatshops seem endemic to globalization. The problem appears too large and too remote to change. Yet students, starting in their own milieu, find a way to tackle the issue. Now others, also starting from the inside, are joining the effort.

Procurement officials or purchasing agents can assist the anti-sweatshop movement inside their daily work. Many, especially those employed by governments, are members of National Sweat Free Consortium (30 Blackstone St., Bangor, ME 04401; www.buysweatfree.org). They uniquely and in cooperation with one another maintain a database of factories that abide by their rules of conduct. They also, writes Bob Senser of *Human Rights for Workers* (<http://humanrightsforworkers.blogspot.com>), "serve as the coordinating point for independent monitoring of factories, investigating complaints and enforcing remedies." Total spending on public service uniforms, to name one product, amounts to several billion a year.

Five cities and four states abide by the Consortium's guidelines, including Wisconsin which got on board after a campaign by students and churches. (*Policy Innovations* [3/1/10], Merrill House, 170 E. 64th St., New York, NY 10065; www.cccia.org)

In other positive news, Knights Apparel (5475 N. Blackstock Rd., Spartanburg, SC 29303) launches its Alta Garcia line exclusively for college stores. The clothes are made in the Dominican Republic, in factories where a living wage is paid, no children are employed and workers' vote on unions is respected. Worker Rights Consortium (5 Thomas Cr. NW #500, Washington, DC 20005; www.workersrights.org) will monitor the factories.

Alta Garcia is the outcome of a two-year dialogue between Knights, WRC and United Students Against Sweatshops (1150 17th St. NW, Washington, DC 20036; www.usas.org).

Meanwhile, University of Wisconsin (Chancellor's Office, 716 Langdon St., Madison, WI 53706) is removing Nike (1 Bowerman Dr., Beaverton, OR 97005) from among its vendors because of grievous violations of the school's code of conduct at two Nike factories in Honduras. The university is a member of USAS. (*University of Wisconsin News*, 4/9/10)

"The Nike Swoosh," comments Senser, "is a symbol of shame. I'd suggest, at a minimum, removing it from anything you might own." (*Human Rights for Workers* [4/10/10]; (<http://humanrightsforworkers.blogspot.com>))

Interestingly, Tiger Woods is shamed for lapses in his private life. What about his more serious violation of social ethics in his endorsement of Nike?

Taking the Initiative *In Labor Relations*

What was the most significant document ever by a U.S. Catholic bishop or bishops? Msgr. George Higgins (1916-2002) plausibly argues it was an 1886 memo supporting the Knights of Labor. Drafted by several bishops and signed by the senior U.S. prelate, Cardinal James Gibbons (1834-1921) of Baltimore, it persuaded Vatican officials not to repeat a condemnation issued in Quebec. The concern was the secular nature of the Knights, specifically its secret codes.

If the Knights were condemned, explains Higgins, there would have been a split between the larger labor movement and "an inconsequential Catholic union." The "sectarian option," which may have been appropriate in Europe, would have diminished the loyalty of many immigrants to their church and would have jeopardized the effectiveness of their organizations.

Higgins' essay goes on to trace the mostly positive relationship between unions and U.S. Catholicism. It is included in *A Worker Justice Reader* edited by Joy Heine and Cynthia Brooke (Orbis Books [2010], PO Box 302, Maryknoll, NY 10545; \$24).

The book contains a similar essay by Fr. Ed Boyle, SJ (1931-2007), former chaplain of The Labor Guild (85 Commercial St., Weymouth, MA 02188; www.laborguild.com). Boyle concentrates on the Catholic labor schools

which in the 1940s and 1950s taught young workers about parliamentary procedure, collective bargaining, social ethics and more. Primarily sponsored by either the U.S. Jesuits or by the lay led Association of Catholic Trade Unionists, the schools numbered over 100 at one time.

Both priests describe changes in the relationship between unions and Catholic institutions. Yet, as Higgins suggests, in seeking to evangelize today's wave of immigrants, Catholic leaders might benefit from 1.) studying labor history and 2.) exploring mutual points of interest with unions.

A Worker Justice Reader, which contains selections from several religious traditions, is a product of Interfaith Worker Justice (1020 W. Bryn Mawr Ave. #400, Chicago, IL 60660; www.iwj.org).

Taking the Initiative *Assisting the Unemployed*

For the past decade St. Francis of Assisi (2150 Frieze Ave., Ann Arbor, MI 48104) has sponsored various unemployed support groups. It recently held a networking event for engineers, one of a series. The parish is also the site for the ecumenical Careers Through Faith (3025 Boardwalk St. #120, Ann Arbor, MI 48108), a career counseling program. (*Our Sunday Visitor* [3/14/10], 200 Noll Plaza, Huntington, IN 46750)

Connections, an unemployed support group, meets monthly on the second Wednesday at Incarnation (5757 W. 127th St., Palos Heights, IL 60463).

UCubed (9000 Machinists Pl., Upper Marlboro, MD 20772; www.unionofunemployed.com) is a resource for machinists and others. Its website is able to connect a job seeker with others in his or her zip code.

The Great Workbench

Most cargo ships "may go 5,000 miles without changing course," writes Burkhard Bilger. "Then when things finally get interesting—when land heaves into view and headlands rise, when currents intersect and winds barrel down from surrounding slopes, when a narrow channel must be negotiated under bridges, between breakwaters, and into a crowded port—the tug captain takes over."

Burkhard goes on to profile Latham

Smith and other “towheads.” Tug boating, he details, is a family business. The benefits of those arrangements are too often outweighed by family feuds. For example, Smith is estranged from his former wife and children, who own a tug business just across the Atchafalaya River from his.

Tug boating “is an unpredictable business,” that requires speculative investment, business and bookkeeping skills, plus once at sea “timing, coordination and spatial reasoning rare in humans.”

Although a tugboat itself is hard to sink, safety is not easy. To avoid pillars or other boats a captain makes small turns well in advance. These maneuvers are more complex with a barge in tow. Bilger describes an incident where a barge came unattached, acting then like “a thousand-ton battering ram.” It took Smith, with Coast Guard helicopters, three days to catch the barge.

Usually Smith gets contracts to move freight or help the oil industry. But he has also moved supplies for the U.S. military and was recently involved in the Haiti relief effort. Most people only occasionally think of seafarers and then imagine them in romantic terms. Yet everyday, competent women and men move food, fuel and goods in and out of harbors so that other workers can routinely go about their life. (*The New Yorker* [4/19/10], 4 Times Sq., New York, NY 10036)

110+ Years *Of Catholic Social Thought*

Ayn Rand (1905-1982), novelist and philosopher, is enjoying yet another burst of popularity. Amazingly her *Atlas Shrugged* (Penguin [1957], 375 Hudson St., New York, NY 10014; \$8.99) had sales in 2009 double that of any previous year, even though Rand has been dead for 28 years.

Rand, who champions the supremacy of the solitary individual, is influential among a few individual entrepreneurs, including some involved with Internet services, among some self-help gurus and among a segment who believe in an unfettered market and who distrust government. These people pit Rand’s ideas against the legislative ideas of President Barack Obama, who is viewed as a big government proponent.

Rand’s popularity is enhanced by the 2009 publication of two biographies: *Ayn Rand*

and the World She Made by Anne Heller (Nan Talese Books, 1745 Broadway, New York, NY 10019; \$35) and *Goddess of the Market: Ayn Rand and the American Right* by Jennifer Burns (Oxford University Press, 198 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016; \$27.95).

At the forefront of Rand’s ideas is the notion that people must dismiss the role of altruism in order to obtain their purpose. As in classical Liberalism, each individual, with *reason* as ammunition, puts their own interest ahead of the collective group. Rand states her extreme view in *The Virtue of Selfishness* (Penguin [1964], 375 Hudson St., New York, NY 10014; \$8). Individual rights “are indispensable,” she writes. Further, the “only implementation” of these rights is the right to earn private property or the right to free trade. All other so-called *economic rights* and the expectation that government protect or deliver those rights are destructive. “There is no such thing as society,” Rand boldly asserts. So-called *society* is only a number of individuals. “Rights impose no obligations [toward neighbors] except...to abstain from violating [other’s] rights.”

Additionally, Rand sees faith and reason as incompatible. So too many secularists act as if faith and reason is an *either/or* proposition rather than complimentary.

It is true that Pope Leo XIII (1810-1903) and other Catholic teachers defend the right to private property. But the purpose of acquiring property and capital is to provide for a worker’s family and community. There is a *social mortgage* attached to all private property, says Catholic social thought.

It is a commonly shared belief that reason, science and human achievement are good. But, explains Pope John Paul II (1920-2005), reason detached from faith, a positivist outlook, leads to relativism and nihilism in which “life is no more than an occasion for sensations and experiences, in which the ephemeral has pride of place.” Without a “profound unity” between faith and reason, he writes, “everything is reduced to opinion; and there is a sense of being adrift.” (*Faith and Reason* [9/14/98], USCCB Publishing, 3211 Fourth St. NE, Washington, DC 20017)

It could even be said that a divorce of faith from reason or human striving weakens systems to the point of collapse. Financiers, social policy planners and politicians in recent years embraced the so-called *virtue of selfishness*, only to cause a worldwide recession,

growing classism, and an uncivil divide in public discourse. To truly advance human enterprise young Christians and others of good will must in the days ahead continually speak and act for charity and the common good.

Rest In Peace

Squire Lance (1933-2010)

Lance was a journalist for *Woodlawn Booster* when in 1962 Ed Chambers, until recently the director of Industrial Areas Foundation (220 W. Kinzie St., Chicago, IL 60654; www.industrialareasfoundation.org), hired Lance for The Woodlawn Organization (1518 E. 63rd St., Chicago, IL 60637; www.twochicago.org). TWO is a civil rights group, organized in 1960 by Saul Alinsky (1909-1972) and his associate, Nick von Hoffman. IAF subsequently sent Lance to Kansas City to staff another community organization.

Lance also served a national civil rights

group before returning to Chicago. For the remainder of his life Lance was heavily involved in political campaigns as well as providing policy advice to several state and county offices. He was also a college teacher.

Lance and his late wife Joyce raised two children on Chicago's south side.

Lance was a reminder not to succumb to stereotypes about organizations. As a Catholic he was liberal on social and economic issues and conservative on cultural issues, including his pro-life and pro-marriage stance. He was fair-minded in his endorsement of IAF as well as with his membership in Opus Dei. It was because of Lance that your INITIATIVES' editor and National Center for the Laity founder Ed Marciniak (1917-2004) assisted Opus Dei's Midtown Educational Foundation (718 S. Loomis, Chicago, IL 60607; www.midtown-metro.org), an alternative junior high and high school.

Happenings

Villanova University Office for Mission (800 Lancaster Ave., Villanova, PA 19085; www.villanova.edu/mission) continues its recent programs on Catholic social thought with a curriculum development workshop, June 7-11, 2010. Teachers will explain how they cover "issues of justice" from a Catholic perspective across the school's course offerings. Sally Scholz from the philosophy department will focus on work, Thomas Smith from humanities will cover the common good, and others will cover peace, ecology, the right to life and more.

Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership (770 Pawtucket Dr., Westfield, IN 46074; www.greenleaf.org) has its 20th annual conference June 17-18, 2010 in Atlanta. It will include over 35 talks and workshops featuring business and education leaders. James Autry, author and former vice-president of Meredith Corporation, and Howard Behar, former president of Starbucks, are on the program. So too are administrators from College of St. Elizabeth (2 Convent Rd., Morristown, NJ 07960; www.cse.edu). They will describe their new doctoral program in educational leadership, inspired by the Greenleaf philosophy.

Greenleaf Center, by the way, distributes its founder's influential book, *Servant Leadership* by Robert Greenleaf (Paulist Press [1977]; \$23).

Celebration (115 E. Armour Blvd., Kansas City, MO 64111; <http://celebrationpublications.org/conference2010>) hosts a conference in Chicago "on effective liturgy," July 21-23, 2001. Titled "A Knock at Midnight: Celebrating Christ in Urgent Times," the conference features Gabe Huck, Sr. Theresa Kane, RSM, Denise Simeone, Grayson Warren Brown and others.

Catholic Charities (66 Canal Center Plaza #600, Alexandria, VA 22314; www.catholiccharitiesusa.org) celebrates its centennial with a September 25-28, 2010 conference and party in Washington, DC. The featured presenters on an initial program are bishops, including Cardinal Josef Paul Cordes of the Pontifical Council on Unity, who was twice the guest of the National Center for the Laity while visiting Chicago. NCL trusts that Catholic Charities will add many lay presenters, as the program develops.

"Food, Glorious Food" is the title of a September 25, 2010 conference on biogenetics and organic farming sponsored by ITEST (200 Archbishop May Dr. #3400A, St. Louis, MO 63119; www.faithscience.org).

“Human Dignity and the Future of Health Care” is an October 28-30, 2010 conference at Institute for Faith and Learning (Baylor University, University Parks Dr., Waco, TX 76798; www.baylor.edu/ifl).

Milwaukee School of Engineering Grohmann Museum (1000 N. Broadway, Milwaukee, WI 53202; www.msOE.edu) features an exhibit on work now until August 20, 2010. Then from September 10, 2010 until January 3, 2011 the museum has a similar exhibit with different items. Occupations in Wisconsin—past and present—are portrayed, including farming, fishing, industry, health, education and presumably tourism.

Websites, Blogs and Resources

Heartland Center Diocese of Gary (6819 Indianapolis Blvd., Hammond, IN 46324; www.heartlandctr.org) recently sponsored a presentation by Not For Sale Campaign (PO Box 371035, Montara, CA 94037; www.notforsalecampaign.org). Slaves, including children, are used in sweatshops, electronics factories and in chocolate harvesting. Many, again including children, are in forced prostitution. These slaves are in Africa, Southeast Asia and are smuggled into the U.S. The Campaign rescues them and provides employment in making and distributing fair trade products. Both Heartland and the Campaign have resources on this topic.

Cesar Chavez Foundation (316 W. Second St. #600, Los Angeles, CA 90012; www.chavezfoundation.org) wants Congress to designate March 31st of each year as a day to honor Cesar Chavez (1927-1993), a champion for migrant workers. Currently eight states recognize the day as a holiday. There is a petition on the website.

Veteran reporter Bob Herguth is editor of the cyber-*Chicago Catholic News* (www.chicagocatholicnews.com). It is a digest gleaned from Lake, Cook, Will and Du Page country sources plus some original reporting and links to several Catholic publications and organizations, including to our National Center for the Laity through the Catholic Labor Network (www.catholiclabor.org) link. *Chicago Catholic News* is “an independent information source” without noticeable bias, supported through donations.

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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.