

Initiatives

In Support of Christians in the World

National Center for the Laity
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Theology or Spirituality?

“How many angels can fit on the head of a pin?” is a theological question. “How do you put yourself on the head of a pin?” is a spirituality question.

A theological question is an exercise in intellectual argument, citing sources and taking a position. For example, what is the ultimate purpose of human work? A spirituality question is an exercise--something to do, share, and even walk others through, using experience. For example, how do you recall the presence of God in the midst of daily hustle and bustle?

A theology of work attempts to use Scripture and tradition to explore the meaning of work, how it relates to our mission in the world and to God’s expectations. A spirituality of work attempts to make the connection between work and our deepest spiritual self, and between the divine spirit and our attention to workplace policies.

There are a few books out there about the theology of work and several on the spirituality of work.

On the theology side, Ben Witherington III, a professor of New Testament at Asbury Theological Seminary writes a “brief primer on the biblical theology and ethics of work,” titled *Work: A Kingdom Perspective on Labor* (Eerdmans Publishing [2011], 2140 Oak Industrial Dr. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505; \$18). He considers work’s relationship to rest, play, worship, the normal cycle of human life, and the coming Kingdom of God. He boldly calls retirement “an unbiblical notion.”

Another Protestant theology of work is Miroslav Volf’s *Work in the Spirit* (Wipf & Stock [2001], 199 W. Eighth Ave. #3, Eugene, OR 97401; \$21.60), which Witherington discusses at length.

Catholic theology on work is found in some papal encyclicals, especially *On Human Work* by Pope John Paul II (National Center for the Laity, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$8).

Also recommended is *After Sunday: A Theology of Work* by Fr. Armand Larive (Continuum [2004], 80 Maiden Ln. #704, New York, NY 10038; \$27.95). “A Theology for Working People,” a PowerPoint based on Larive’s book, is available for review from National Center for the Laity (PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629).

Many of the books on a spirituality of work have a New Age or evangelical perspective. A representative entry is *Workplace*

Spirituality: A Complete Guide for Business Leaders by Nancy R. Smith (Axial Age [2006], 444 Chatham St., Lynn, MA 01902; \$27.95), which claims to be “the first book that presents workplace spirituality as personally meaningful and spiritually diverse while also emphasizing the essentials of business ethics and corporate social responsibility in a global world.”

Other recent titles include *Joy at Work, Work at Joy* by Joan Marques (Personhood Press [2010], PO Box 370, Fawnskin, CA 92333; \$24) and *Bringing Your Soul To Work* by Alan Briskin and Cheryl Peppers (Berrett Koehler [2000], 235 Montgomery St. \$650, San Francisco, CA 94104; \$16.95). Both titles put an emphasis on positive attitudes in the workplace.

Parker Palmer has written two well-respected books on workplace spirituality: *The Active Life* (John Wiley [1999], 1 Wiley Dr., Somerset, NJ 08875; \$16.95) and *Let Your Life Speak* (John Wiley [1999]; \$18.95).

On the Catholic side, former NCL president Greg Pierce’s *Spirituality at Work: Ten Ways to Balance Your Life on the Job* (National Center for the Laity, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$10) offers this definition: “The spirituality of work is a disciplined attempt to align ourselves and our environment with God and to incarnate God’s spirit in the world through all the effort (paid and unpaid) we exert to make the world a better place, a little closer to the way God would have things.”

Is this distinction between theology of work and spirituality of work helpful? In what way? What are the best books you have read on either topic? Please inform INITIATIVES.

Taking the Initiative

In the Restaurant

Many diners do not know that waitresses and waiters get \$2.13 minimum wage. Tips are a presumption. In fact, workers pay taxes according to an IRS tip formula, even if a cheapo leaves nothing. Further, most waiters and waitresses give a portion of their tip to kitchen workers.

Restaurant Opportunities Center United (350 Seventh Ave. #1504, New York, NY 10001; www.rocunited.org) recently released a report, *Behind the Kitchen Door*, explaining the restaurant labor situation. ROC has eight regional affiliates and the 75-page report has regional versions. *Waiting for Change* by Sylvia Allegretto and Kai Fillion (Economic Policy

Institute, 1333 H St. NW, Washington, DC 20005; www.epi.org) is a 22-page report that evaluates the wage structure for all workers who depend on tips.

Rep. Donna Edwards (5001 Silver Hill Rd. #106, Suitland, MD 20716; <http://donnaedwards.house.gov>) has introduced a Wages Act (HR 2570) to gradually raise the minimum before tips to \$4.35. (*Labor Notes* [3/11], 7435 Michigan Ave., Detroit, MI 48210 & *America* [4/4/11], 106 W. 56th St., New York, NY 10019)

How about it INITIATIVES' readers: Is 20% a proper tip? Are there exceptions?

Taking the Initiative

In Child Care & Elder Care

New York State is now the first with a Domestic Workers Bill of Rights. It requires a day off each week and three vacation days each year for so-called *nannies*. It has provisions for overtime and safety policies.

Domestic Workers United (1201 Broadway #907, New York, NY 10001; www.domesticworkersunited.org) spent six years drafting and then lobbying for the bill.

Because the work occurs in private homes, enforcing policies is difficult. A DWU counterpart, National Domestic Workers Alliance (330 Seventh Ave. #1900, New York, N Y 1 0 0 0 1 ; www.nationaldomesticworkersalliance.org), is tackling that challenge at the federal level. (*Yes!* [Spring/11], 284 Madrona Way NE #116, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110 and *N.Y. Times*, 4/15/11)

Taking the Initiative

In the Cab

INITIATIVES first mentioned Bhairavi Desai in 1998. She was only 23, organizing New York Taxi Workers Alliance (250 Fifth Ave. #310, New York, NY 10001; www.nytw.org). She's still at it and she still doesn't have her driver's license.

Hers is difficult work. Cabbies are mostly independent contractors, who work alone for multiple employers and who have no single place to start or end the workday. Over 90% are immigrants; 60 languages are spoken by N.Y. City cabbies. Most are young men and many are unaccustomed to women leaders. Passengers might assume that cabbie wages improve with each fare increase. However, it is usually the medallion owner, not the driver who benefits.

Desai is polarizing; but she has to stir the pot to keep the cabbies' interests in front of employers, passengers, regulators and politicians. NYTWA is currently fighting a proposal to require cabs to cruise outer boroughs, waiting for a radio call to pick up an out-of-the-way passenger. NYTWA members would suffer as more jitney cabs enter the business and their

cabs are diverted from prime spots. (*The New Yorker* [4/18/11], 4 Times Sq., New York, NY 10036)

Taking the Initiative

In Business Ethics

The Business and Human Rights Resource Center (1-3 Charlotte St. #300, London, England W1T 1RD; www.business-humanrights.org) provides up-to-the-hour reports of allegations on corporate human rights violations, plus corporate response.

The Center is promoting a 27-page document, *Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights* by John Ruggie (Kennedy School of Government, 79 John Kennedy St. #83, Cambridge, MA 02138). The document will be presented to the United Nations Human Rights Council this month. It provides businesses with a sense of predictable expectations and gives a measurement tool of corporate conduct to stakeholders. (*Human Rights for Workers* [3 / 2 4 / 1 1] , <http://humanrightsforworkers.blogspot.com>)

The Center for Business Ethics (Bentley University, 175 Forest St., Waltham, MA 02452; www.bentley.edu) offers a June 6-10, 2011 workshop for corporate compliance officers. Topics include ethical styles of management, corporate responsibility in a global economy and more.

The Center also publishes booklets and reprints talks on ethics, including *Ethics as a Business Strategy* by Andrew Liveris, chair and CEO of Dow Chemical.

Work and Art

He peddles a bicycle around Manhattan at age 82. He has never owned a TV. "He doesn't give a fig about his own clothes," writes Maureen Dowd. He usually wears "a blue Paris street-sweeper's shirt with pockets for his gear... He also has a plastic poncho for rainy days that he patches up with duct tape." Yet society types and models are pleased when Bill Cunningham drifts into a party or a show. That's because he is the fashion photographer for the *N.Y. Times*. Cunningham also preaches the Catholic faith, but not consciously, certainly not with words.

Cunningham never samples the hors d'oeuvres nor even takes a cola at any of the galas he covers. "I just try to play a straight game, and in New York that's almost impossible to be honest and straight," he says in a new film, *Bill Cunningham New York* directed by Richard Press (Zeitgeist Films, 247 Centre St., New York, NY 10013; www.zeitgeistfilms.com). There was an advance screening in April at Gene Siskel Film Center (164 N. State St., Chicago, IL 60601). Other outlets now have the film.

Cunningham's plain-looking garb is not a silent protest against fashion. His vocation, he

says, is “looking for something that has beauty.” His work is important because, as says a character in *The Idiot* by Fyodor Dostoevsky: “The world will be saved by beauty.”

But Cunningham believes that fashion is all around, and so he spends many hours on N.Y. City’s streets looking for a stylish accessory or a unique outfit. His selections often appear as a collage in the *N.Y. Times* and they often set a trend. “His sensibility is exhilaratingly democratic,” writes Lauren Collins.

In a profound way, Cunningham’s humble lifestyle attunes him to the beauty crafted by unknown designers and selected by ordinary pedestrians. He knows the elite, but he cherishes the common touch. He is, says Collins, “a fashion monk, but he is really closer to an oblate—a layperson who has dedicated his life to the tribe without becoming a part of it.” (*N.Y. Times*, 4/6/11 and *The New Yorker* [3/16/09], 4 Times Sq., New York, NY 10036)

The Great Workbench

John Hartsock begins *Seasons of a Finger Lakes Winery* (Cornell University Press [2011], 512 E. State St., Ithaca, NY 14850; \$22.95) with a dogmatic error: Wine “doesn’t contribute to the basic necessities of life,” he asserts.

Well, a spiritual life is certainly a necessity. Further, the Holy Eucharist (“We have this wine...fruit of the vine, work of human hands.”) is fundamental to the spiritual life—at least in Catholicism, Anglicanism, and Orthodox Christianity and in many Protestant denominations. Therefore wine is necessary, thus making Hartsock’s *Seasons* not only a narrative about work, but also a meditation on the Eucharist.

There are about 100 craft wineries in the New York Finger Lakes region that sell to the public. *Craft wine* does not automatically mean high quality, Hartsock explains. It means a maximum production of 25,000 cases per year, mostly sold on-site, plus in a few regional stores, plus by way of UPS. By contrast, the big U.S. producers with over 250,000 cases sell through supermarket chains and elsewhere. Hartsock features Long Point Winery (1485 Lake Rd., Aurora, NY 13026; www.vineyardpoint.com) which bottles just in excess of 4,000 cases annually.

There are three job descriptions at a craft winery—although the division of labor is not precise: First, the vine dresser or farmer; second, the vintner or wine maker; and third, the distributor, including bottling, publicity, sales and more. At Long Point owner Gary Barletta is the winemaker. His wife and co-owner Rosemary with some helpers handles all the many production details. Dan Stevens is currently their vineyard manager.

Grape farming in the Finger Lakes dates

back at least to the 1830s. But for many years the product was table grapes and grape juice, with only few small wineries, known to local people. Then in 1962 Konstantin Frank, an immigrant from the Crimea, figured out a productive way to grow vinifera grapes in the region. His Dr. Konstantin Frank Cellars (9749 Middle Rd., Hammondsport, NY 14840; www.drfrankwines.com) now distributes Riesling and chardonnay in nearly every state. Among reds, cabernet franc and pinot noir do well along N.Y.’s lakes. A breakthrough for U.S. wine in general occurred in 1976 when, Hartsock writes, it beat French brands in a contest held in France. Thereafter, a number of stateside wineries were launched.

The winery business is low risk, but low return. “Few wineries fail,” Hartsock says. That doesn’t mean easy work for the Barlettas and their employees. As in all agriculture, attention to time is crucial. “Wine is transient in nature,” Hartsock reflects. At one moment there is fermented grape juice. Then, unless a skilled winemaker intervenes, there is vinegar.

There’s plenty of anxiety in the process too: The weather, of course; and financing; and payroll. Or like the time the Barlettas had to recall cases of their most popular wine because earlier in the process excess yeast lingered in the spouts--causing delayed exploding bottles. Or stress over the details of a tourist event during which Long Point served stew. Over two-thirds of sales at these small wineries occur during tourist visits.

Each year for nearly the past 50, your INITIATIVES’ editor vacations in the Finger Lakes, yet until Hartsock’s book oblivious to “the work of human hands” there. That’s because INITIATIVES stays at a private vineyard overlooking one of the lakes, where the owner, a boyhood friend, without mentioning any toil in the long process, uncorks dry chardonnay, superior cabernet franc and more—about 15 bottles a day, which is usually enough. Smile.

Maybe appreciation for the work of the Barlettas and other winemakers can help Christians appreciate what it is that becomes God during our Eucharist celebration: human work.

To learn more about a taste of heaven on the way to heaven, send for *Finger Lakes of NY Wine Country* (1 W. Market St. #303, Corning, NY 14830; www.fingerlakeswinecountry.com).

120 Years

Of Catholic Social Thought

Catholic social thought often calls upon the virtue of distributive justice as an antidote to poverty. That is, policies have to be tilted toward the less fortunate so they have an opportunity to participate in society and the marketplace. But what about creating wealth and new jobs? Can Catholicism commend those, usually in the

private sector, who expand the capitalist pie? If of course an economy is a zero-sum proposition, then redistribution is the only remedy to poverty. But if not, is there a way to bless entrepreneurs, investment advisors and others?

“It is all too easy to damn capitalism in moral terms,” writes Philip Jenkins in the foreword to *Wealth and Justice: the Morality of Democratic Capitalism* by Arthur Brooks and Peter Wehner (Rowman & Littlefield [2011], PO Box 62193, Baltimore, MD 21264; \$9.95). Capitalism can, however, “be reconciled with religion and morality,” Jenkins says. It actually fulfills “the Biblical mission to raise the poor.”

The 67-page booklet defends this proposition with sections on human nature, ethics, justice and “economic achievements of capitalism.” The authors even tackle the charge that the system, while creating wealth, has a side effect of *spiritually* impoverishing its so-called *beneficiaries*.

Brooks and Wehner readily admit that capitalism “is not flawless. And under certain conditions it can become exploitive and self-destructive.” They then name several positives in the system.

At the same time the booklet makes assertions that border on baptizing an economic system. For example, the authors say that “the poor gain the most from capitalism,” without noting the increasing wage and wealth gap. They say that free markets are “responsible for advancing human rights.” Yet workers in Wisconsin, Ohio, other states and overseas are routinely denied the right to organize—a principle of Catholic doctrine. For an enjoyable counterweight to the booklet, try *Why Marx Was Right* by Terry Eagleton (Yale University Press [2011], PO Box 209040, New Haven, CT 06520; \$25).

Rethinking Poverty: Income, Assets and the Catholic Social Justice Tradition by James Bailey (University of Notre Dame Press [2010], 310 Flanner Hall, Notre Dame, IN 46556; \$30), like Brooks and Wehner, considers the morality of wealth creation, but in a practical manner.

Bailey details how the poor can become self-sufficient upon elimination of discrimination in access to mortgages, insurance, fair credit and more. He also describes a few innovative policies to facilitate assets, like individual development accounts. Along the way, Bailey finds many references to asset development or wealth creation for the poor in Catholic social thought.

Michael Sherraden (Center for Social Development, 1 Brookings Dr. #1196, St. Louis, MO 63130; www.wustl.edu) is a leader in the assets for the poor movement. His books are *Inclusion in the American Dream* (Oxford University Press [2005], 198 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016; \$50) and *Assets and the Poor* (ME Sharpe [1991], 80 Business Park Dr., Armonk, NY 10504; \$32.95).

A long time ago the earliest Christian writing, *The Didache*, noted a moral advantage

to an economy in which people actively participate, rather than receive alms. It thus encouraged Christian leaders to create opportunity for others.

Rest in Peace

John Donahue (1927-2011)

As long time executive director of Serra International (65 E. Wacker Pl. #802, Chicago, IL 60601; www.serraus.org), Donahue thought that local Serra Clubs had a unique opportunity through their semi-monthly meetings to explore together the everyday implications of the gospels and Catholic social teaching. Whenever he spoke at a Serra gathering, Donahue included an appeal for a “University of Christian Principles.” He saw Serra as an instrument of continuing education in theology, scripture, ethics and spirituality for men and women immersed in the challenges of the marketplace and of civic and family life. He stressed the Serra objective to help members fulfill their own Christian vocations to service, as a complement to the organization’s aim of promoting Church vocations. In fact, Donahue sensed that seminarians will more likely emerge from a vocation culture of lay Catholics dedicated to their work, than from a culture which divorces Sunday from Monday.

Donahue often quoted Teilhard de Chardin: “Why should there not be groups vowed to the task of exemplifying by their lives the general sanctification of human endeavor, those who would devote themselves in the fields of thought, art, industry and politics, etc. to carrying out, in the sublime spirit these demand, the basic tasks which form the bonework of human society.” (*The Divine Milieu*, Harper Collins [1960], 1000 Keystone Industrial Pk., Scranton, PA 18512; \$14).

Through his leadership, Donahue challenged Serra to be such a group: a seedbed for developing Catholic lay leaders in their workplaces and communities.

When the charter for the National Center for the Laity, *The Chicago Declaration of Christian Concern*, was published in 1977, Donahue reprinted it in the *Serran* magazine, strongly endorsing its message. Meeting with NCL leaders, he often expressed his hope to integrate awareness of the laity’s vocation in and to the world more effectively into Serra’s mission.

After retirement from Serra International in 1991, Donahue served as executive director of the Arthur J. Schmitt Foundation, whose mission is to support Catholic education through scholarships offered through secondary, undergraduate and graduate schools in the Chicago area. In that capacity he continued as a friend to NCL.

Happenings

“Catholic Social Teaching and Issues of Justice” is a June 6-10, 2011 workshop at Villanova University (800 E. Lancaster, Villanova, PA 19085; www.villanova.edu/mission). It will assist teachers from many disciplines put Catholic doctrine into their syllabus.

Villanova also boasts a Center for Social Justice Film which recently won top honors at the Garden State Festival.

“Living Justice in the 21st Century,” is a June 9-10, 2011 conference sponsored by Rev. William Young Center (University of St. Thomas, 3800 Montrose Blvd., Houston, TX 77006; www.theyounginstitute.org).

“Theology and the Arts” is a June 20-22, 2011 institute at Oblate Renewal Center (285 Oblate Dr., San Antonio, TX 78216; www.ost.edu). Presenters include Kathleen Norris and Mary Jo Leddy. Popular author and columnist, Fr. Ronald Rolheiser, OMI, is president of the Center.

A theological symposium about work on June 18-19, 2011 will precede the annual conference of Interfaith Worker Justice (1020 W. Bryn Mawr Ave. #400, Chicago, IL 60660; www.iwj.org). Both events are at DePaul University.

An international meeting of the Jacques Maritain Association (Gannon University, 109 University Sq. #PMB 3121, Erie, PA 16541; www.jacquesmaritain.org) is October 13-15, 2011 at Notre Dame.

A November 19, 2011 conference at the University of Illinois Chicago is sponsored by Vesper Society (115 Sansome St., San Francisco, CA 94104; www.kingdomofGodonline.com). It will process deliberations now occurring among young adult groups and in parishes. The conversation is guided by *A New Way of Seeing* by former National Center for the Laity president Greg Pierce (Acta, 4848 N. Clark St., Chicago, IL 60640; gfpierce@aol.com).

Websites, Blogs and Resources

The Rank and File Catholic is a two-sided, 8.5” X 14” newsletter published by David Grief (141 Bruce Ave. Paducah, KY 42001; dmgrief@comcast.net). It contains labor relations news from Kentucky, plus a reflection from its chaplain, Fr. Anthony Shonis. The current edition also has a reflection from National Center for the Laity friend Fr. George Schultze, SJ of St. Patrick’s Seminary in California. To save printing and postage costs, Grief prefers readers request the e-version of *Rank and File Catholic*.

Labor Life, the newsletter of the Labor Guild (85 Commercial St., Weymouth, MA 02188; www.laborguild.com), has a new look: color, more short items and a rearranged format for “job opportunities,” labor relations events in the Boston area, some national news and more; plus a new location for the “chaplain’s corner,” written by Fr. Patrick Sullivan, CSC.

The John A. Ryan Institute (2115 Summit Ave., St. Paul, MN 55105; www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies/cst) website now has the papers from a February conference titled “The Logic of Gift and the Meaning of Business.” Authors include, among others, Stefano Zamagni, who influenced *Love in Truth* by Pope Benedict XVI (National Center for the Laity, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$6) plus a paper by Mike Naughton of the Institute.

The Working Catholic is a new blog by INITIATIVES’ editor Bill Droel. It appears at www.chicagocatholicnews.com and irregularly at www.chicagounionnews.com. Droel’s twice-monthly *View from the Hill* column is in the Views section of www.mvccglacier.com.

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