

Initiatives

In Support of Christians in the World

National Center for the Laity
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Rest in Peace

Vaile Scott (1926-2013)

It was in about 1989 that I first heard about Vaile Scott. On the way to a downtown planning meeting to honor Msgr. Dan Cantwell (1915-1996), my passenger, Fr. Dennis Geaney, OSA (1914-1992), predicted that Scott would be there. "He's a great leader," Geaney said. "For the past few years he has focused on his business." Indeed, Scott was there and he took charge of invitations. Within a short time Scott joined our National Center for the Laity board and was thereafter elected president. Thus for about 25 years I communicated with him almost daily—short calls, e-mail, mailings.

In the late 1940s, following service in the U.S. Army, Scott became an undergrad at St. Ambrose College in Davenport, IA. The college had a seminary annex and Scott met some seminarians, including Marv Mottet (later Msgr.), who for a time directed Catholic Campaign for Human Development.

Some St. Ambrose students, including Scott and Mottet, joined Young Christian Students. Scott was elected national YCS president in 1949 and served until July 1951. This involvement introduced Scott to activist circles, particularly in Chicago--connections that he maintained throughout his life. Scott began to appreciate that the tension between a young adult's ideals and the real world is normal. In fact, with the YCS method for processing one's experience the tension is ripe with possibility.

While still based in Davenport, Scott visited Chicago and was introduced to Cantwell and Ed Marciniak (1917-2004), founders of NCL. He moved here just as the Catholic groups were vacating their 3 E. Chicago Ave. office. Some groups went to 21 W. Superior St., only a block south. Scott's YCS headquarters went to 642 W. Deming Pl.; but he was in-and-out of both offices. When his term at YCS ended, Scott spent more time with the Catholic Labor Alliance (later called Council on Working Life) and with its renowned paper, *Work* (and later its magazine, *New City*).

In 1955 Cantwell and Russ Barta (1918-1997), NCL's first president, started the Adult

Education Center. Scott soon joined the staff. He became its director in 1960.

During this period Scott was also president of South Lynne Community Council, a neighborhood organization in Chicago's West Englewood. Then Scott became president of the Association of Community Councils for Metro Chicago, a citywide coalition. In 1961 the Scotts moved to Oak Park, IL. Along with others, he helped that town achieve racial and economic stability.

Around 1962 Scott's Adult Education Center moved to 1307 S. Wabash Ave. and acted as an umbrella for several groups: the Council on Working Life, the Film Center, the Biblical Institute, World Peace Center and *New City* magazine. In 1968, however, the AEC lost its main funding. For a time, Scott and other volunteers kept alive the Summer Biblical Institute and the Chicago Center for Film Study. He was then hired as director of the Woodstock Center. Scott was also an owner of a payroll management firm, located in Darien, IL. It moved briefly to an old warehouse in Forest Park, IL and for about a year NCL moved in with it.

Leadership is a mix of many qualities. But all leaders must have one essential quality which Scott had in plentitude: tenaciousness or follow-up. For example, NCL regularly gets notes from INITIATIVES' readers and others. Scott sent thoughtful replies; maybe just to share reminiscence, but usually to encourage an update from the trenches. He wrote letters to hundreds of leaders around the country—enough letters to fill eight boxes now in my attic. Scott presumed that everyone was "worth contacting one more time" to attend an NCL meeting, to furnish an additional contact, to instruct NCL on a topic and the like. At each lunch he and I shared (usually at the Columbia Yacht Club...more on it shortly) Scott talked through a prepared list of 8-10 people. He reflected on each one's interests. He was curious about the implications of someone's new job or their new residence. He followed the same routine with organizations: "Have we heard from that teachers' group in Pennsylvania; that church in downtown Boston...?" If Scott said he would study an

article, sound out a prospective leader, contact a donor, write a letter or make a call, it would always get done before our next lunch.

There is talk in our church about *new evangelization* and *fortified apologetics*. Scott used a better term, *adult education*. He read about it, he reflected on it and he put the concept into practice.

Surveying the research a few years ago, Scott determined that “less than 2% of the Catholic adult population [engaged in] any serious study of their faith.” The percentage is likely lower today. Here’s what doesn’t work, according to Scott: “Immediate renewal crash programs,” “superficial solutions to a crisis,” programs designed with “proselytizing motives” and programs that entail “an all too neat apology intended to dispel all questions” or a program where “content must be fully prepared by experts and then filtered down through the diocese.” Instead effective education for Catholic adults “is continuing, voluntary and informal.” It must “offer imaginative, stimulating, forward-looking programs presented in an exciting format.”

In its peak year Scott’s Adult Education Center had 2,500 participants at a dozen sites. Its courses included: The Bible, Liturgy, Ethics and Foreign Policy, Relations with Protestants, Evolution, Spiritual Insights from Psychology, Film and Religious Themes, God and Caesar (about church and state), Walking Tour of Chicago, and many more. AEC through its Summer Biblical Institute and its John A. Ryan Forum, also sponsored lectures by renowned theologians, diplomats, legislators and others.

Likewise during his NCL tenure, Scott’s passion was *lay formation* or *adult education*. He hosted several Barta-Cantwell Roundtables (luncheon discussions with an author or researcher). He facilitated similar discussions each year in conjunction with NCL’s Labor Weekend Mass. Scott gave leadership to NCL’s regional meetings (in Washington, Corvallis, New York Albany and elsewhere) regarding the World Synod on the Laity. Scott directed NCL’s Good Work Project, a series of leadership gatherings, again in several locales. And Scott brought NCL into close collaboration with the Coalition for Ministry in Daily Life, assisting with national conferences in New Haven, St. Paul, Cleveland, Pasadena, and Chicago. Scott was the leader for NCL’s major conference in January 1998, “Challenges Facing 21st Century Christians.” Reports on the conference appeared in many Catholic publications and in the Chicago media. Nearly

all of NCL’s current leaders got involved through this conference. One newspaper began its conference report like this: “Vaile Scott isn’t a juggler, but like other leaders, he spends much of his time keeping projects, thoughts, worries and ideas in the air.”

More important than all his public accomplishments, Scott and his wife Mary raised six children. He was, naturally, fond of 17 grandchildren and consistently loyal to his relatives and friends.

Through a business promotion Scott got hooked on sailing. True to his passion for education, he taught many others how to sail. In fact, about three months ago I met a student interested in Catholic journalism. “Ordinarily Vaile Scott would join us,” I mentioned. “Oh, I know him,” the student replied. “When I was younger he took me out on his boat.” Amazing.

NCL will soon reshape its board and “replace” Scott. A fund, payable “National Center for the Laity,” in Scott’s honor has been established. It is unlikely, however, that any replacement will have a boat as big as Scott’s. His powerful *Abegweit* is a 372-foot long ice-cutter. It is also known as the Columbia Yacht Club, permanently docked in Lake Michigan, near Chicago’s Navy Pier. Many NCL meetings were held there; leading to the expression: “NCL is out to sea.” Smile.

In early 2002 *The Boston Globe* brought our bishops’ scandalous mismanagement of personnel to national attention. Scott was then asked: What happens now that the church has lost its credibility? His reply is still instructive:

This scandal might contain an opportunity. A positive outcome hinges on some questions: Will a sufficient number of men and women assume Christian leadership in their own right? Will they find the resources and organize around the vision proposed by Vatican II? Will clergy and laity alike work together in a context that avoids clericalism and immature dependency? Will lay people restore Christian witness to the world, while not ignoring needed Church reform?

The missing piece right now is a comprehensive structure and sufficient resources, including funding, for quality leadership training on a regional and national level.

Christian witness to the world must not devote too much attention to individualistic spirituality with all the psychological overtones of *feel good piety*. It should also be

wary of *Business Week*-type of *doing well by doing good*... Catholics cannot view the world as totally full of evil. Nor can we presume personal ethics are enough or that the market itself will bring about a better world...

In my opinion we need to revive the concept of formation through action. Not to bring back the Young Christian Students. But a style of formation that draws upon the YCS insight. The future of the church is people with a common interest who invest in a reflection/action process that relates to their profession, their neighborhood, their family life and our political context.

Rest in Peace

Mary Ann McMorrow (1930-2013)

McMorrow, a National Center for the Laity board member, was the first female judge on the Illinois Supreme Court. She served as chief justice for three years; again, the first woman. In fact, McMorrow was the first in many accomplishments. She was the only woman in Loyola Law School's 1953 class, where she was elected class president and was an editor of the law review. She was the first woman to try felony cases as a state's attorney and more.

Judge Tom Donnelly, an NCL board member, was a clerk for McMorrow in the mid-1980s. She taught him and many others to write two opinions on cases: a reversal and then an affirmance. She believed, says Donnelly, that fairness requires understanding "the strongest argument of the other side." This meant that McMorrow might "overrule" her own initial thinking. "Sometimes she would have to go back to the other two judges on the appellate panel and say *I have changed my mind, will you change yours?* Many times the panel would say *no* and what began as a majority opinion became a dissent," Donnelly remembers. Her thoroughness meant intellectual honesty. "Never would she permit a clerk to equivocate or be economical with the truth," Donnelly says. That honesty extended to her campaigns for office, even refusing a donation that she felt might later touch on cases in her court.

McMorrow's legacy is not primarily all the opinions issued over the years. It is the influence she had on many clerks and young lawyers both in Chicago and nationally.

Taking the Initiative

For Farmers

Corporate farm acreage is increasing, while family farms are disappearing. The growth of industrial agriculture changes the farming process and our food. Genetic engineering, agrichemical technology and government policies influenced by large companies all hurt family farms and impose health risks to people's hormonal, antibiotic and other systems. Meanwhile, most urban and suburban dwellers know little about farms and the workers that produce their meals.

Richard Aleman, an editor of *Gilbert Magazine* (American Chesterton Society, 4117 Pebblebrook Cr., Minneapolis, MN 55437), provides history of the "back to the land movement" from the early 1900s and suggests current alternatives to industrialized agriculture. His article, "Rural Roads to Distributism," rests on the Catholic *principle of distributism*. It is different from socialism which shares wealth but often forsakes local efforts in favor of the state. Distributism is not about transfer of money but about widespread ownership of land and companies. (*Houston Catholic Worker* [11/12], PO Box 70113, Houston, TX 77270; www.cjd.org)

Aleman's article draws upon *The Church and the Land* by David Bovee (Catholic University of America Press [2010], 620 Michigan Ave. NE, Washington, DC 20064; \$79.95), a history of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference (4625 Beaver Ave., Des Moines, IA 50310; www.ncrlc.com). Aleman introduces Msgr. Aloysius Ligutti (1895-1983) and his 1940 book, *Rural Roads to Security* (download from <http://archive.org>). Ligutti, long associated with NCRLC, began his work with farmers during the Great Depression. He observed that families on their own land had freedom their dispossessed fellows lacked.

Ligutti used the government's homesteading program to resettle 50 families in Granger, IA. With some supplemental work in nearby mines, those families eventually got off government relief. A community of farms shares chores and goods, Ligutti preached. Their fertile soil grows of healthy souls.

It takes some effort for consumers to support those who maintain an alternative food supply. Through Community Supported Agriculture (PO Box 95061, Santa Cruz, CA 95061; www.localharvest.org) consumers can

buy subscriptions to local farms in exchange for weekly produce. Consumers can also support cooperatives. For example, Organic Valley (1 Organic Way, LaFarge, WI 54639; www.organicvalley.coop) has a directory of family farms that sell produce, milk, meat and more. Prairie Farms (1100 Broadway, Carlinville, IL 62626; www.prairiefarms.com) is a coop of 700 family farms that distribute under the Prairie Farm label. In addition to all the above resources, the Environmental Working Group (1436 U St. NW #100, Washington, DC 20009; www.ewg.org) supplies information on national farm policies, food and water safety and several other topics.

Taking the Initiative

In Sports

Sports is holy, says Bishop Thomas Paprocki of Springfield, IL in *Holy Goals for Body and Soul* (Ave Maria [2013], PO Box 428, Notre Dame, IN 46556; \$13.95). He makes this claim well aware that some athletes use illegal drugs to supposedly enhance their performance. He's aware that the sin of child abuse plagued the Penn State athletic program. He knows that too many arrogant professional stars are overpaid for mediocre seasons. He knows that an injurious style of play is of concern in professional football and in Paprocki's favorite sport, hockey.

Nonetheless, holiness is found in "everyday life activities." It is wrong, says Paprocki, to think holiness "is incompatible with any state of life," including homemaking, business or the law. As it so happens, Paprocki, longtime friend of National Center for the Laity, is a law school graduate and a founder of Chicago Legal Clinic (2938 E. 91st St., Chicago, IL 60617). He also, per the title of this book, spends time as a hockey goalie; plus he is a marathon runner.

To have *everywhere holiness*, a Christian has to develop workaday virtues, or what Paprocki terms "steps." He offers eight steps or disciplines. Some are obvious: friendship and fortitude. Some are unusual: fear, frustration and failure. An athlete doesn't seek these negatives. But a whole, holy life requires understanding where they come from and how to see through them. Paprocki gives plenty of examples, drawn from his own experience on the ice and from his involvement with Catholic Athletes for Christ (3703 Cameron Mills Rd.,

Alexandria, VA 22305; www.catholicathletesforchrist.com).

In sports, as in other situations, people acquire nicknames. Paprocki's is "Holy Goalie." It makes for a promotional tag. But "you don't have to be a bishop to be a *holy goalie*," Paprocki writes. INITIATIVES makes the caution about the nickname stronger. Being a bishop is irrelevant to being a goalie and being a bishop in itself is irrelevant to holiness. A goalie must be competent; a bishop must be competent; a holy person must competently juggle priorities, always keeping God at the top.

Taking the Initiative

For Sabbath Time

"Perhaps the most important insight into work in biblical tradition is that it must stop," writes Darby Kathleen Ray in *Working* (Fortress Press [2011], PO Box 1209, Minneapolis, MN 55440; \$15). *Exodus* says explicitly to do all your work in six days and rest the seventh; as should "your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns."

"Despite the importance and grandeur of divine work, God rests--and insists that we do likewise," continues Ray, who directs Millsaps Faith and Work Initiative (1710 N. State St., Jackson, MS 39210; www.millsaps.edu). By including slaves and livestock and immigrant workers in the commandment, God assumes a social dimension to the Sabbath. That is, the Sabbath is not observed if consumers presume it is moral without qualification to have others work at the shopping mall on the Lord's Day.

Day does not mention the capital punishment involved in *Exodus* for violating this commandment: "Anyone who does work on the Sabbath shall be put to death." *Isaiah*, in contrast to *Exodus*, offers a positive reason for the Sabbath: If you do not follow "your own pursuits on my holy day; if you call the Sabbath a delight...if you honor it by not following your ways and seeking your own interest...then you shall delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth."

Day does provide a three-fold typology to help contemporary Christians interface with 21st century workaholic expectations and non-stop consumerism: 1) work as a way to earn living; 2) work as cultivating selfhood and enhancing human dignity; 3) work as a means of

service to others. Unfortunately, she concludes, “too many workers in today’s economy have to check their creativity, autonomy, and pride at the door, entering a world where someone else’s vision, authority, bank account, and selfhood rule.”

120+ Years

Of Catholic Social Thought

An older type of conservatism was wary of extreme individualism. They put emphasis on small groups, writes E.J. Dionne Jr. in *Our Divided Political Heart* (Bloomsbury [2012], 175 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010; \$18). Lately conservatives have “left community behind” in favor of a libertarian-style *freedom from*. Liberals likewise champion individualism on lifestyle and cultural issues. Though liberals voice support for community, they often equate society with the state.

The tension between “our love of individualism and our reverence for community” is healthy, says Dionne. Our democracy is not about “becoming all one thing or all another,” he writes. “We are a nation of individualists who care passionately about community. We are also a nation of communitarians who care passionately about individual freedom.”

In arguing for a balance Dionne draws upon a 1977 booklet by Fr. Richard J. Neuhaus (1936-2009) and Peter Berger, *To Empower People: the Role of Mediating Structures in Public Policy* (American Enterprise Institute, 1150 17th St. NW, Washington, DC 20036). It says that the neglect of middle ring groups puts a person in direct contact with big bureaucracies. The solitary person of course stumbles under the weight and at the same time large institutions lose their original meaning and are, say Berger and Neuhaus, “viewed as unreal or even malignant.”

In the late-1970s INITIATIVES was attracted to Berger and Neuhaus’ booklet and its subsequent mediating structures project at AEI as a fresh way to communicate the insights of Catholic social thought, particularly the *doctrine of subsidiarity*. Catholicism celebrates unions, ethnic clubs, community organizations, precincts, school associations, professional groups and the like. These local entities are uniquely able to protect and nourish individual *freedom for* and at the same time point people toward wider responsibility. Under proper conditions these small groups are capable of

holding big institutions true to their own intended purpose.

The term *subsidiarity* is making a minor comeback. Unfortunately, some Catholics are misusing it; equating it with libertarian *freedom from*. Catholic doctrine does not say: Government is best which governs least. It does say: Government (and big business) is best when services are delivered through institutions close to those affected by the services.

North American Spirituality

Fr. Francis Gilligan (1898-1997)

Pope John Paul II (1920-2005), speaking in Assisi in October 1986, distinguished *prophets of peace* from *builders of peace*. Gilligan was a builder; that is, he persistently found opportunities *inside* the system to advance peace and justice.

Gilligan was a Fall River priest. He was sent to Catholic University to obtain a doctorate in moral theology. While there he met Msgr. John A. Ryan (1869-1945) of St. Paul, a renowned expert in Catholic social thought. Ryan encouraged Gilligan to tackle racism in his thesis. “It’s an undeveloped field [in the 1920s],” Ryan told Gilligan. The thesis was published in 1928 as *The Morality of the Color Line*.

Gilligan was recruited to teach at St. Paul Seminary (2115 Summit Ave., St. Paul, MN 55105). Through many involvements “Gilligan would practice in Minnesota the principles Ryan advocated on the national scene,” write Tom O’Connell and Tom Beer in *Minnesota History Quarterly* (345 W. Kellogg Blvd., St. Paul, MN 55102; Summer/11). “Over a long career,” they detail, “Gilligan remained committed to forging practical approaches to achieving his morally based social goals.”

Gilligan worked for social change by starting *inside* the institution with which he had the most influence: the church. In those days it was heavily invested in anti-communism efforts. Merely denouncing communism is ineffective, Gilligan told Catholic leaders. Workers will be attracted to Catholicism if it is involved in struggles for economic and racial justice. With this theme he accepted hundreds of speaking engagements. He eagerly cultivated contacts among business people and professionals. “As his contacts developed,” write O’Connell and Beer, “so did his tactics.” Gilligan systematically helped to integrate one institution after another: hotels, clubs, labor unions, the National Guard,

the insurance industry and more. He served on civic boards, participated in awards banquets, joined coalitions, attended many meetings; always on alert for an opening to justice. For five years he served as president of St. Paul Urban League and chaired the Governor's Interracial Commission for 12 years.

In his late-50s Gilligan became pastor of St. Mark (550 W. Seventh St., St. Paul, MN 55102) and 15 years later was appointed director of the local Propagation of the Faith. He maintained his community involvement throughout. Using his many contacts, Gilligan sided with residents in during "a marathon campaign" against a freeway. (*Ramsey County*

History [Winter/13], 75 W. Fifth St., St. Paul, MN 55102)

"Looking back," say O'Connell and Beer, "Gilligan's studied gradualism, his yen for conciliation and his deep faith in moral education might seem naïve." The prophets of peace understandably can get impatient with the builders of peace. "But there was nothing soft about [Gilligan's] insistence on a socially engaged church." His steady promotion of racial and economic justice "remains as relevant today as it was then."

Happenings

Our Sunday Visitor (200 Noll Plaza, Huntington, IN 46750) has begun its second century as a U.S. Catholic newspaper. At a time when newspapers of all kinds are going under, this is an accomplishment. *OSV's* anniversary edition reprints representative front pages from 1912-1936. Anti-communism is a major theme; so is opposition to prejudice against Catholics. On the later topic, *OSV* defended immigrants and their contributions to our country—a story line the paper continues today. *OSV*, then and now, also urges lay people to be informed in the faith and give witness.

The Chicago Reporter (332 S. Michigan Ave. #500, Chicago, IL 60604; www.chicagoreporter.com) celebrates its 40th anniversary. It is investigative reporting on race relations, poverty, immigration, work, the courts and more. Its stories usually emanate from Chicago, but have national implications. It is published in magazine format (about 30-40 pages) six times annually. The *Reporter's* founder is John McDermott (1926-1996), who was also a National Center for the Laity board member.

The National Center for the Laity welcomes publication of another booklet in Acta Publications' series on public skills. This one is titled *Public Friendship* by Bill Droel. (See page eight for an order form.)

The booklet is concerned that young adults are losing personal contact in favor of technology-mediated relationships. It draws upon other authors who voice caution about a wholesale adoption of cyber-tools. For example, Evgeny Morozov in *To Save Everything, Click Here* (Public Affairs [2013], 250 W. 57th St., New York, NY 10107; \$28.99) says normal situations or conditions are now often labeled as *problems*. Why? Because there is an electronic device or two that can supposedly solve the so-called *problem*. There's an app for that. The result is that normal life, which should involve normal coping, is trivialized. The moral and political dimension of life is lost.

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Editor: Bill Droel (wdroel@cs.com). Follow Droel's blog, *The Working Catholic*, on www.chicagocatholicnews.com.

Contributing to this issue: Ambrose Donnelly, recent graduate of St. Ignatius High School (1076 W. Roosevelt Rd., Chicago, IL 60608); Bob Senser, author of *Justice at Work: Globalization and Workers* (National Center for the Laity, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$6.50)

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Board Members of NCL include Tom Donnelly, Bill Droel, John Hazard, Caroline Hopkinson, Phil Moore, Frosty Pipal, Terry Mambu Rasch and Lauren Sukal.

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"Nowhere does [Scripture] say that Our Lady and St. Joseph, who were closest to the child, heard the angels' voices or saw the marvelous radiance [in the Bethlehem stable.] On the contrary, they heard the child crying... Now tell me frankly, would you not rather have been in the dark stable [with Mary and Joseph] which was full of the baby's crying, rather than with the shepherds, ravished with joy and gladness by sweet heavenly music and the beauty of a marvelous light?" –St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622), a patron of several religious orders and a patron saint for newsletter journalists.

