

# Initiatives

In Support of Christians in the World

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

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

March  
2013

Number  
205

## 50 Years since Vatican II

Vatican II (1962-1965) marks a sea change in the church's self-understanding, said Russ Barta (1918-1997) at the Council's midpoint. Barta, founding president of our National Center for the Laity, had these comments (lightly edited) in 1964:

There is hardly any modern achievement that did not leave in its wake dire warnings and anathemas from Church leaders. Science and human evolution, the secular state, psychoanalysis, feminism and the cry for adulthood by women, the understanding of mutuality in married life, the rise of democracy—all or most of these aspects of modernity first received a resounding *No* from the Church, rather than an understanding *Yes*.

It is true enough that [modern] ideas and movements often rose to the surface wearing the guise of anti-clericalism, atheism or rationalism. But it is also true that the Church's response was not exactly that of the prophet, but rather that of the privileged institution, defending its status quo.

It is against this background that we must see Vatican II and its monumental efforts to open the windows to let the fresh air in, but also to open the doors to let Christians out—out from the church as citadel, as alienated, as separated; out from the church as beleaguered; instead propelled into the world. Not to conquer the world, not to dominate it, but perhaps to influence it, to cooperate with it, and collaborate with it...

I am convinced that excessive preoccupation with certain dangerous trends in U.S. culture has blinded us to its overall promise and significance. In particular the great U.S. experiment to create a secular order is significant. It is not a pernicious trend, but in principle it is good.

[Unfortunately], a great many Catholic spokespeople—including some members of the hierarchy, some clergy and some laity—confuse the issue by not distinguishing between *secular* and *secularism*. [A *secular society* is a] process that has moved directly

opposite the position once occupied by the church in the Middle Ages, when the world existed and built itself around and within the church. [On the other hand, *secularism*--just like consumerism, atheism and utilitarianism--drives out the spiritual and must be opposed...]

U.S. secular society no longer expresses its unity in explicitly religious rhetoric, but in ethical terms. It has to do with rights, dignity and meaning. Catholics should, of course, place rights in the context of religion. But the essential language in which we carry on temporal tasks is no longer religious... [Therefore,] phrases like *Christianize society* are out of date and ineffective. In the present reality it is better to describe the Christian's task in the world as an effort to *humanize it*...

A *new pedagogy* is required to help lay people thrive in the world. [This does not mean surrendering to secularism. It does not mean that] the world is simply a playground the fortunate [or] just a place to keep busy. It is not a temporary training camp to develop virtue and void vice, a place to be used but ultimately cast off. The world is related in some meaningful fashion to Christ's second coming. The world is a gift we have received and which we must return fully developed, fully matured, fully human and adequately embellished—a gift worthy of the people of God.

Russ Barta

## Taking the Initiative

### *On the Road*

The schedule of an interstate truck driver is regulated by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. A driver can *punch-in* anytime, day or night. The driver must, however, *punch-out* no more than 14 hours later. He or she cannot stop and restart a shift.

Within the 14-hour shift the driver can be on the road a maximum of 11 hours, leaving three hours for loading and unloading, fueling, bookkeeping and more. Because of the 11-hour rule a driver caught in traffic not only delays the delivery, but also cuts into his or her available work hours. During the ten hours after *punch-out*, eight consecutive hours must be spent in the truck's sleeper berth, leaving two hours for personal time. To repeat, a driver cannot restart the clock until all the regulations in this 24-hour routine are met. FMCSA enforces the rules by using the driver's logbook, tollbooth records, dock receipts and more.

Now, even though a workday could be 14 hours, most drivers are paid only for the time they are on the interstate—a maximum of 11 hours. "Because of the numerous delays that can occur while driving long distances," observes Benjamin Snyder, drivers rarely can "use all 11 hours of available driving time--his [or her] revenue-producing hours."

For three years Snyder documented life on the road. Drivers, he says, usually take the Federal safety rules in stride. They imagine their own families in the cars on the interstate and thus appreciate safety's priority.

It irritates drivers, however, when delays at docks exceed three hours within the 14-hour shift. Snyder explains how drivers call ahead to plan pick-ups and deliveries. The dock hands are usually cooperative. But not so with some shipping clerks who arbitrarily keep trucks in a holding pattern or waste time processing orders.

The job is tedious and mostly solitary. Yet Snyder finds many drivers who are affirmed by the challenge of delivering freight on time to a precise destination. They take professional pride in "cultivating temporal virtues" like conscientiousness, vigilance and proper focus—all the while navigating weather, traffic, routes, rules and dock personnel. (*Hedgehog Review* [Fall/12], PO Box 400816, Charlottesville, VA 22904. The entire issue of this journal treats "work and dignity.")

## Taking the Initiative

### *For the Family*

Children of the poor are seven times more likely to drop out of school, more likely to be obese and far more likely to become teenage parents, write Randy Albelda and Lisa Dodson in *How Youth Are Put at Risk by Parents' Low-Wage Jobs* (Center for Social Policy, University of Massachusetts, 100 Morrissey Blvd. #Wheatley 500-028, Boston, MA 02125). Although a job is the obvious solution to family poverty, write Albelda and Dodson, a lot depends on the type of job. There is growing evidence that "low-wage jobs can cause harm to young people's health, education and overall development." (*Chicago Tribune*, 1/7/13)

For several years simply having a job has not been enough to move a family upward. Poverty has become multi-generational. Even for a middle-class family, wages at best have grown only 13% in the past 15 years. "Overall employee compensation—including health and retirement benefits—has slipped badly," writes Annie Lowrey. Meanwhile, corporate profits have climbed, as well wages for the top 1%. (*N.Y. Times*, 1/13/13)

However, to consider family poverty with only an analysis of "income inequality is often misguided," writes Stuart Butler. An upwardly mobile family must draw upon three interdependent forms of capital: financial, social and what Butler labels human capital, which includes intellectual ability, education and a set of family traits or habits.

Drawing upon Robert Putnam (*Bowling Alone*, Simon & Schuster [2000], 1230 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10020; \$16.99) and others, Butler says of the three forms "social capital is surely the most important" and the family is "the most important [social capital] institution in our society, especially at the critical formative stage." But in a catch-22, social poverty, like economic poverty, has become multi-generational. The very families most at risk also happen to be surrounded by "few institutions of social support," including vibrant churches, powerful labor unions or accountable precincts.

To discuss human capital--the third form of poverty—is to risk blaming one or another family for its poverty. Nonetheless, and drawing upon Paul Tough (*How Children Succeed*, Houghton Mifflin [2012], 215 Park Ave. S., New York, NY 10003; \$27) and others,

Butler describes how character is crucial to combating poverty. For example, the habit of saving or investing is “the key to mobility” in a capitalist economy. It “can improve children’s economic prospects regardless of their parents’ income.” Many families are stuck in poverty because instead of teaching children the habit of saving, those parents model the habit of debt. Here Butler does not point a finger at a family, but faults institutions that encourage debt, including mushrooming lotteries and payday loan stores.

Butler concludes with a criticism of “government as the primary tool for addressing our social problems.” There is not a one-size-fits-all remedy. “The breakdown in social capital cannot be pre-fabricated by the federal government, packaged with grants and parachuted successfully into neighborhoods at will.” (“What Is Upward Mobility?” in *National Affairs* [Winter/13], 1730 M St. NW #910, Washington, DC 20036)

According to the Catholic principle of *subsidiarity*, the family is the primary resource for a person’s success and happiness. Unions, community organizations, ethnic clubs, and the like are, in turn, unique resources for the family. The government’s role is to fulfill *distributive justice*. But, says Catholicism, the least amount of government is not the best government. Simply, that government programs are best delivered in partnership with particular families and their supportive buffer institutions.

## Taking the Initiative

### *Making Saints*

Dorothy Day (1897-1980), a founder of the Catholic Worker movement, is a step closer to official sainthood following the U.S. Catholic bishops’ endorsement of her cause at their November 2012 meeting.

Patrick Jordon, drawing on two sources, quotes Day in a recent essay: “I cannot bear the [religious] romantics. I want a religious realist. I want one who prays to see things as they are and to do something about it... Why [is] so much done in remedying social evils instead of avoiding them in the first place? ...Where are [those who] try to change the social order, not just to minister?” (*Commonweal* [1/25/13], 475 Riverside Dr. #405, New York, NY 10115)

For more information on Day’s sainthood cause: Dorothy Day Guild (1011 First Ave. #1200, New York, NY 10022;

[www.dorothydayguild.org](http://www.dorothydayguild.org)). To get a prayer card for Day’s intercession, send a small donation to Houston Catholic Worker (PO Box 70113, Houston, TX 77270). And no matter what happens in the official saint-making process, INITIATIVES already declares Day the patron saint of Catholic newsletters in the U.S.

---

## Work and Art

Aman Sethi, a journalist from India and author of *A Free Man* (W.W. Norton [2012], 500 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10110; \$24.95), names “the five best stories about work” for the *Wall St. Journal* (11/24/12):

- *The Nights of Labor* by Jacques Ranciere (1981; out-of-print) is based on letters, newsletters and essays by early 19<sup>th</sup> century “tailors, hat makers, carpenters and [other] laborers” in France. The workers are hardly unthinking automatons. The word *night* serves as a metaphor for the reflective spirit that expresses itself after work hours.
- *Working* by Studs Terkel (New Press [1974], 38 Greene St., New York, NY 10013; \$18.95) is a well-known collection of reflections from blue-collar, pink-collar and one Roman collar workers. In 1977 Stephen Schwartz and others created a musical version of *Working*. An updated production was recently staged at 59E59 Theater (59 E. 59<sup>th</sup> St., New York, NY 10022). Other oral histories of work have imitated Terkel, including *Not Working* by DW Gibson (Penguin [2012], 375 Hudson St., New York, NY 10014; \$17).
- *Rivethead* by Ben Hamper (Warner Books [1991], 1271 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10020; \$19.99) recounts his days at General Motors. “The most harrowing part of the book,” says Sethi, “isn’t the clamor of the assembly line but the quiet, grinding drudgery of layoffs.”
- *Down and Out in Paris and London* by George Orwell (Houghton Mifflin [1933], 222 Berkeley St., Boston, MA 02116; \$14) tells about the 25-year old author’s unemployment and under-employment, introducing “themes that he fleshes out in his later works.”
- *Extreme Measures* by Martin Brookes (Bloomsbury [2004], 175 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010; \$24.95) is a biography of scientist Francis Galton (1882-1911) who invented strange devices and was obsessed

with breeding human genius. Galton coined the term *eugenics*.

The themes in these five books are universal. Yet the settings strike INITIATIVES as outdated. Can INITIATIVES' readers suggest contemporary portrayals of work—in fiction or non-fiction, on the stage or the screen?

---

## Work Prayers

### *Blessing at Meals*

"I should like a great lake of the finest ale for the King of kings.

I should like a table of the choicest food for the family of heaven.

Let the ale be made from the fruits of faith, and the food be forgiving love.

I should welcome the poor to the feast because they are God's children.

I should welcome the sick to the feast because they are God's joy.

Let the poor sit with Jesus at the highest place, and the sick dance with angels.

God bless the poor, God bless the sick, and bless our human race.

God bless our food, God bless our drink, all homes, O God, embrace."

--St. Brigid of Kildare (451-525 A.D.)

---

## 120+ Years

### *Of Catholic Social Thought*

Pope Leo XIII (1810-1903) begins his 1891 encyclical *On Capital and Labor* with a demand that "some opportune remedy must be found quickly for the misery and wretchedness pressing so unjustly on the majority of the working class." Catholic social teaching since then has consistently argued for humane working conditions and fair wages, and in support of the formation of unions to protect workers' rights.

Arguably, the most effective indictment of the injustice, callousness and cruelty suffered by great masses of people during the Industrial Revolution came from the pen of Charles Dickens (1812-1870).

*Charles Dickens and the Workhouse: Oliver Twist and the London Poor* by Ruth Richardson (Oxford University Press [2012], 198 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016; \$29.95) sheds light on how Dickens was able to depict these conditions with such empathy and understanding. Richardson describes her recent discovery that Dickens, as a child and then again as a young newspaper reporter, lived nine doors

from a major London workhouse. She asserts: "He'd have heard the stonebreakers' hammers and howls of the pauper lunatics, smelt it in the wind--Mr. Bumble walked right past his door." The Cleveland Street Workhouse, she claims, was certainly the inspiration for *Oliver Twist*. Had Dickens not resided down the block from a workhouse (in addition to his own miserable experience of working in a shoe blacking factory as a 12 year old), "the poor of Victorian Britain may not have had such a dedicated and sympathetic champion."

Richardson shows how society's punitive attitude toward the poor led to acceptance of realities such as farming by the infant poor, deplorable conditions in the workhouses, the apprenticeship system for pauper children and the New Poor Law.

It's worth noting also that *Oliver Twist*'s unsentimental view of society includes a vivid portrayal of a violent underworld of backstreet criminals. In what Richardson terms "a pervasive culture of predation," Dickens exposes evil among the lower rungs of society, as well as the hypocrisy and systemic injustice of the powerful.

Like Dickens, Catholic social teaching, beginning with Leo XIII, does not romanticize the poor. It realizes that poor people, like everyone else, are sinners. But again like Dickens, Catholicism rejects harsh judgments regarding the poor and the useless distinction between a *deserving poor person* and an *undeserving one*. Catholicism resists the temptation to justify violations of workers' dignity and rights by blaming poor people for their plight.

---

## Rest in Peace

### *Millard Hughes (1925-2013)*

Hughes possessed an outstanding understanding of Catholic social doctrine, but not because he studied encyclicals in a Catholic college or seminary. His expertise came by way of life experience. He was educated at Prairie View College in Texas and Roosevelt University here in Chicago. He served in the U.S. Navy, among those pioneers who desegregated our armed forces. He was a baseball scout and a business manager for a semi-pro basketball team. His family was among the first to integrate Homewood, IL. Hughes served in the Cook County Office of Economic Opportunity, where he helped start Ford Heights Community Center.

Later, he was an underwriter for New York Life Insurance.

Hughes was a leader in Young Christian Workers. In fact, in 1957 he was elected treasurer of Chicago Federation of Young Christian Workers, responsible for dues from over 1,000 members. The chaplain for Hughes' own YCW section, which met weekly, was Msgr. Reynold Hillenbrand (1904-1979), one of a handful of leaders to develop the Catholic Action movement in the U.S.

Hughes was persistent, likable, willing to appear anywhere and everywhere. He consistently avoided pettiness, choosing instead to focus on the greater good of the church and society.

## Rest in Peace

*Frank Macchiarola (1941-2012)*

Macchiarola was among those “who kept [New York] from fiscal collapse” in the 1970s and who in many civic positions “set a standard that successors could only try to emulate,” says the *N.Y. Post* (12/18/12).

Mayor Ed Koch (1924-2013) was impressed with Macchiarola's service with the Emergency Financial Control Board, so Koch appointed him at age 37 to be chancellor of the city schools.

As school chancellor, Macchiarola introduced reforms that are either standard today or are worth revisiting. To restore respect for teachers he required *citizenship training* for all students in every grade. He tackled integration locally in contrast to broad brush policies. At first he could not implement the practice of putting ninth-graders in high school and designating sixth, seventh and eighth graders as middle-school students. Today that system is standard. Macchiarola sometimes clashed with unions, but at the end of his term the union president pleaded for him to remain.

Macchiarola held several administrative positions in higher education—in both public and private colleges. He obtained his undergraduate degree from St. Francis College (180 Remsen St., Brooklyn Heights, NY 11201), where he later served as president and as chancellor at the time of his death.

Along the way Macchiarola and his wife Mary raised three sons. On occasion Macchiarola provided source material to INITIATIVES. For example, in 2003 Mayor Michael Bloomberg asked Macchiarola to mediate a dispute between Broadway theaters

and striking musicians. Sure enough, INITIATIVES got timely information from Macchiarola.

## Rest in Peace

*John Philbin (1923-2012)*

The term *re-segregation* is perhaps not familiar in all locales. In Chicago and elsewhere it refers to the purchase by a black family of a house on a neighborhood block, while the block to the west remains white. A few days later a second black family moves to the block, until the block is all black. Then the pattern repeats itself until the next all-white block to the west becomes all black.

In the years after World War II Austin, where Philbin lived, “remained one of the most stable neighborhoods in [Chicago],” write Dominic Pacyga and Ellen Skerrett in *Chicago: City of Neighborhoods* (Loyola University Press, 1986). But by the early 1960s the neighborhood to Austin's east had re-segregated. Two community organizations in Austin knew that racial change is not simply a decision by one family after another. The groups uncovered and fought immoral real estate panic peddling and mortgage redlining, plus inadequate government monitoring. Yet within 12 years, Austin was nearly all black. Philbin, learning from this experience, was determined to integrate the area west of Austin, the Village of Oak Park.

There Philbin was a founder of the Oak Park Regional Housing Center (1041 South Blvd., Oak Park, IL 60302; [www.oprhc.org](http://www.oprhc.org)), dedicated to racial diversity. He also served as a village trustee for many years, including a term as president. Along with some bankers, business leaders and community activists, Philbin's Oak Park is today integrated.

Philbin was also director of Chicago's Catholic Cemeteries where, no surprise, he integrated burial grounds. (The surprise perhaps is that anyone ever thought that God approved of segregating the dead.)

Philbin was eventually appointed director of finance for the Archdiocese of Chicago, the first lay person in the Curia. All the while, he and wife Mary raised seven children.

Philbin “was a true pioneer,” says Vaile Scott, past-president of National Center for the Laity. He was “both a civic leader during the transition of the racial and cultural makeup of Oak Park and also one who understood the proper role of lay people in the exercise of his Catholic faith in a pluralist, secular society.

## Happenings

As part of the celebration for Vatican II's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, our National Center for the Laity is co-sponsoring a conference about Pope John XXIII (1881-1963) on March 21-23, 2013 at the University of Notre Dame. For more information: Center for Social Concerns (Geddes Hall, Notre Dame, IN 46556; [www.socialconcerns.nd.edu](http://www.socialconcerns.nd.edu)).

Center for Integrity in Business (Seattle Pacific University, 3307 Third Ave., Seattle, WA 98119; [www.spu.edu](http://www.spu.edu)) has an April 10-12, 2013 forum on "Economics and Theology for Marketplace Leaders."

April 12, 2013 is the launch date for what will become an annual conference on "Social Injustice." The sponsor is School of Social Work and Criminal Justice (Virginia State University, 1 Hayden Dr., Virginia State University, VA 23806; [gahmed@vsu.edu](mailto:gahmed@vsu.edu)). This first conference will be wide-ranging with topics related to health care, environment, religion and more.

Portsmouth Institute (285 Cory's Ln., Portsmouth, RI 02871; [www.portsmouthabbey.org](http://www.portsmouthabbey.org)) hosts "Catholicism and the American Experience" on June 7-9, 2013. Featured speaker is George Weigel (Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1730 M St. NW #910, Washington, DC 20036; [www.eppc.org](http://www.eppc.org)). Among the other presenters is Peter Steinfels (Institute on Religion and Culture, 80 Claremont Ave. #203, New York, NY 10027; [www.ircpl.org](http://www.ircpl.org)), who is a longstanding friend of National Center for the Laity.

"Coming Home" is a retreat for veterans on June 14-16, 2013 in Mundelein, IL. The sponsor is Mayslake Ministries (450 E. 22<sup>nd</sup> St. #170, Lombard, IL 60148; [www.mayslakeministries.org](http://www.mayslakeministries.org)). Mayslake regularly sponsors retreats or days of reflection targeted for specific occupations, including a recent offering for medical professionals.

On October 8, 2012 President Barack Obama dedicated the Cesar Chavez National Monument (29700 Woodford Tehachapi Rd., Keene, CA 93531; [www.nps.gov/cech](http://www.nps.gov/cech)). Maintained by the National Park Service, the monument is near Chavez' grave, a farm workers museum and a conference center. At the dedication Obama prayed: "Let the Spirit flourish and grow; so that we will never tire of the struggle. Let us remember those who have died for justice; for they have given us life. Help us to love those who hate us; so we can change the world. Amen." (*NFWM News & Views* [Fall/12], 438 N. Skinker Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63130; [www.nfwm.org](http://www.nfwm.org))

Bill Moore, long a friend of National Center for the Laity, writes with a reminder to boycott Crystal Sugar products. For about 20 months the company has conducted a lockout against its workers from Local 167 Bakery, Confectionary, Tobacco and Grain Millers (100 N. Third St. #50, Grand Forks, ND 58203; [www.boycottacs.com](http://www.boycottacs.com)). A lockout is an unacceptable tactic, says Moore. It is, however, increasingly used. For example, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra has locked out the Twin Cities Musicians Union (708 First St. N., Minneapolis, MN 55401; [www.tcmu.com](http://www.tcmu.com)). And, although professional athletes are not starving workers, the recent National Hockey League fiasco was not a strike by the Professional Association (20 Bay St. #1700, Toronto, Ont. M5J 2N8 Canada; [www.nhlpa.com](http://www.nhlpa.com)). It was a lockout.

Mark Kurowski (Benedictine University Ministry, 5700 College Rd., Lisle, IL 60532; <http://ben.edu/vatican>) writes to say students are welcome to participate in an essay contest about Vatican II (1962-1965). Winners, who need not be Benedictine students, get a scholarship to that school plus publication in their journal, *Constellation*.

## INITIATIVES

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

Published eight or nine times per year by  
National Center for the Laity, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629

Editor: Bill Droel ([wdroel@cs.com](mailto:wdroel@cs.com)). Follow Droel's blog, *The Working Catholic*, on [www.chicagocatholicnews.com](http://www.chicagocatholicnews.com). Contributing to this issue: Bob Raccuglia (Cenacle Retreat Center, 513 W. Fullerton Pkwy., Chicago, IL 60614; [www.cenaclechicago.org](http://www.cenaclechicago.org)).

Fr. Sinclair Oubre (Catholic Labor Network, 1500 Jefferson Dr., Port Arthur, TX 77642; [www.catholiclabor.org](http://www.catholiclabor.org)) hosts the web version of INITIATIVES at [www.catholiclabor.org/NCL.htm](http://www.catholiclabor.org/NCL.htm).

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

NCL is a 501-C-3 organization, supported entirely by donations. If you missed NCL's annual appeal letter of Advent 2012, you can now donate using the form on the back page. Obviously, postage and printing costs increase regularly. Please respond as best as you are able.

Permission to reprint INITIATIVES' items is granted. Please give proper credit.

"The most influential priests and other Church employees are those who have long ago given up the illusion that the church is at the service of the marketplace only when they themselves are on the scene. They understand clearly that whenever any secular Christian lay person works responsibly and faithfully in a trade union, business corporation, neighborhood association or city hall that the servant church is present and hence Christ is present." –Ed Marciniak (1917-2004), a founder of National Center for the Laity

### Attention Readers

The National Center for the Laity can extend its network and better balance its budget with an increase in circulation for INITIATIVES.

Please send along postal addresses of three friends and colleagues. They will get INITIATIVES for one year for **free**. You will get a **free** copy of either *Hungering and Thirsting for Justice: Stories by Young Adult Catholics* or *An Irrepressible Hope: Notes from Chicago Catholics*. Note your choice on your list of new INITIATIVES' readers or use the form on page eight of this newsletter; clipping your list of new readers to it.