

Initiatives

In Support of Christians in the World

National Center for the Laity
PO Box 291102
Chicago, IL 60629
www.catholiclabor.org/NCL.htm

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NCL's 30th Anniversary

As part of its anniversary celebration, our National Center for the Laity took responsibility for hosting a four-day consultation on faith and work in late May 2008 under the auspice of Coalition for Ministry in Daily Life (2015 NE Loop 410, San Antonio, TX 78217; www.dailylifeministry.org). Young adults in business, labor relations and politics were panelists. Presenters included Rev. Martin Marty, NCL founder Larry Suffredin, David Miller and Kathleen Kennedy Townsend....

The 1928 presidential campaign featured phrases like *yellow dog Democrat*—referring to the South's allegiance to the Democratic Party—and *rum, Romanism and rebellion*—a slur against candidate Al Smith of New York, a Catholic. Democrats in 1928 were divided on Prohibition but favored aid to farmers, improved collective bargaining and more regulation of energy companies. The eventual presidential winner was Republican secretary of commerce Herbert Hoover.

Forty years later, during the 1968 campaign, no one looked back to 1928, observed Townsend in her CMDL talk. In the current campaign, however, there is interest in parallels between 1968 and 2008. For example, 1968 presidential candidate Robert Kennedy (1925-1968) is the subject of several recent books, articles and profiles, including *The Last Campaign* by Thurston Clarke (Henry Holt Co. [2008], 175 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010; \$25) and *Robert Kennedy and the 1968 Indiana Primary* by Ray Boomhower (Indiana University Press [2008] 601 N. Morton St., Bloomington, IN 47404; \$21.95), and a photo-essay in *Vanity Fair* (4 Times Sq., New York, NY 10036; 6/08), another in *N.Y. Times Magazine* (6/1/08), an essay in *America* (106 W. 56th St., New York, NY 10019; 5/26/08), and more.

Townsend, the oldest of Robert and Ethel Kennedy's 11 children, described her father and how his life relates to today's young adults. He was able, she believes, to creatively exploit the tension between love and anger. His love was not patronizing nor was his anger reckless. He was empathetic toward the less

fortunate but challenged them to take action. In that spirit Townsend recalled a comment her father once made about passivity in the face of injustice: "Why is there no graffiti on the pyramids? The slaves in Egypt should have been angry enough to cry out."

Townsend, in sharing how her father explained her uncle's murder to her, said Robert Kennedy is interesting today in part because "young adults yearn for examples of people who go forth from tragedy with empathy."

Townsend, the author of *Failing America's Faithful* (Warner Books [2007], 1271 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10020; \$24.95), thinks *the left* split in 1968 and in some ways lost its bearings.

The smaller faction appreciated that the civil rights movement was grounded in churches and so it tried to stay in harmony with people's faith. She included the Industrial Areas Foundation (220 W. Kinzie #500, Chicago, IL 60610; www.industrialareasfoundation.org) in this faction; one example of a progressive group that is serious about religion.

The other, larger faction—including the black power movement and many liberal foundations—judged the church-based approach of Rev. Martin Luther King (1929-1968) to be soft. Taking cues from counterparts in Western Europe, it turned totally secular, discarding Judeo-Christian roots. It embraced feminism and gay rights without bothering to listen to the churches. This faction's strategy, Townsend said, was different from the original suffragettes and abolitionists, who took exception to some Bible passages, but treated religion seriously. The secular left, as it turns out, has lost "the moral high ground."

To be continued...

Work Prayers

Holding On

A pastor and his staff were discussing prayer postures. "The traditional kneeling position is the most reverent," the pastor asserted. "I am most attuned in a sitting yoga posture," said the 50-something pastoral

associate. "The best posture for prayer is standing perfectly still, perhaps in front of the tabernacle," opined the devout liturgist.

An electrician, who was pulling cable through the building, overheard all this. "I was outdoors last week and my screwdriver touched a hot connection. My ladder gave way and I hung tight to the pole. Believe me, that posture put me in the mood for prayer."

North American Spirituality

Bishop John Carroll (1735-1815)

In April Archbishop Timothy Dolan of Milwaukee gave the first in a series of lectures to honor Carroll during this bicentennial of Baltimore becoming an archdiocese and Bardstown, Boston, New York, and Philadelphia becoming dioceses.

Dolan makes clear that Carroll, our first U.S. bishop, "was impeccably loyal" to the pope and to what we today call the Vatican. Carroll "was sincerely convinced that unity with [the pope] was essential for the integrity of the Catholic faith." At the same time Carroll insisted "that Rome consider the Catholic church in the U.S. not as a mission but as a genuine church," one that is "visible, respected, a participant in this daring political project." For Carroll the U.S. Catholic church, even though a minority in a sometimes anti-Catholic culture, is not a sect "to be hidden and quiet."

Dolan, with some humor, describes Carroll's situation in 1784, when he was appointed *superior of the U.S. mission*: no canonical parishes, no schools, no real clergy assignments, no "charitable outreach, no bingo or fish fries." Yet Carroll remarkably established nearly all the structures of the church still used today.

Dolan likewise describes many of the ways Carroll, while faithful to dogma and the Vatican, put a *made in the U.S.* label on our church. For example, says Dolan, he opened a seminary in Baltimore "to form a native clergy instead of depending upon international priests." He proposed that clergy elect the U.S. bishop. (The vote was unanimous for Carroll with one abstention, presumably his vote.) He experimented with English at Mass. "He was open to assertive lay leadership."

On this last point Dolan is negative on the lay trustee experiment, in which laity operated parishes. Dolan mentions the worst examples and correctly implies that hiring and

firing priests (as in several U.S. denominations) is not necessarily democratic or beneficial. Other historians, however, draw some positive lessons from the lay trustee movement.

Carroll "dared believe" that the whole church would one day "come to celebrate" the U.S. style of religious freedom "as most beneficial for the faith," concludes Dolan. He supplies a story to illustrate how far the Vatican and the universal church traveled from Carroll's time to Vatican II (1962-1965). In 1783 the Vatican conferred with a U.S. official in Europe, Benjamin Franklin. The Vatican wanted to know if Congress would allow the appointment of a bishop in the U.S. "only to hear from Franklin that the nomination of bishops was of absolutely no concern at all to Congress." Even though the European church was often on the short end of state meddling, the Vatican officials in 1783 could not yet see the benefit of Franklin's attitude. (*Origins* [5/8/08], 3211 Fourth St. NE, Washington, DC 20017)

For more information on the Carroll lecture series: Archdiocese of Baltimore (320 Cathedral St., Baltimore, MD 21201; www.archbalt.org). By the way, the Association for the Rights of Catholics in the Church (3150 Newgate Dr., Florissant, MO 63033; www.arcc-catholic-rights.net) is promoting sainthood for Carroll and, in typical U.S. fashion, seeks signatures on a petition.

North American Spirituality

Cesar Chavez (1927-1993)

U.S. Representative Joe Baca (201 N. E St. #102, San Bernardino, CA 92401; www.house.gov/baca) introduced a bill (H #76) to establish a national day to honor Chavez, co-founder of the United Farm Workers Union (PO Box 62, Keene, CA 93531; www.unitedfarmworkers.com). Ten states already observe such a day. Its purpose is not "a day off," but an opportunity for schools, businesses and other institutions to study labor relations, food processing, Mexican-American immigration and more. Earlier this year Baca introduced in Congress an innocuous resolution to honor Chavez on his birthday. It was blocked through parliamentary procedure. (*Chicago Sun Times*, 4/19/08)

The National Catholic Rural Life Conference (4625 Beaver Ave., Des Moines, IA 50310; www.ncrlc.com), drawing inspiration from Chavez, advocates reform in the Farm Bill

and campaigns for wholesome food production and consumption. Chavez, says NCRLC, would applaud the agreement signed in May by Burger King and Coalition of Immokalee Workers (PO Box 603, Immokalee, FL 34143; www.ciw-online.org) by which tomato pickers now get an additional 1.5 cents per pound, increasing their pay to about 77 cents per bucket. (*N.Y. Times*, 5/24/08)

One Night in America by Steven Bender (Paradigm [2008], 3360 Mitchell Ln. #E, Boulder, CO 80301; \$22.95) is a 246-page report on Chavez' career, focusing especially on his relationship with Senator Robert Kennedy (1925-1968). Beware: Bender feels compelled to insert his pro-abortion stance into the book, devoting an entire chapter to his assertion that Mexican-Americans should abandon the pro-life doctrine.

For a biography, it's *Cesar Chavez and La Causa* by Dan LaBotz (Longman [2005], 1 Lake St., Upper Saddle River, NJ 07458; \$20.95).

Cesar Chavez, the Catholic Bishops and the Farmworkers' Struggle by Marco Prouty (University of Arizona Press [2006], 355 S. Euclid #103, Tucson, AZ 85719; \$40) is a study of the UFW's grape (1965-1970) and lettuce (1970-1977) campaigns. The bishops, concerned about donors among supermarket executives and growers, did not initially help. Instead, the farm workers got assistance from other religious leaders, including Presbyterians like Rev. Chris Hartmire, of what is now National Farm Worker Ministry (438 N. Skinker Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63130; www.nfwm.org).

Insiders to the Catholic bishops, especially Msgr. George Higgins (1916-2002) and now-Cardinal Roger Mahony, and outsiders to the bishops like Catholic college students and others eventually turned enough of them toward the cause.

North American Spirituality

Dorothy Day (1897-1980)

This is the 75th anniversary of the Catholic Worker Movement, founded by Day and Peter Maurin (1877-1949). The hub of the movement is Maryhouse (55 E. Third St., New York, NY 10003; www.catholicworker.org) and nearby St. Joseph House (36 E. First St., New York, NY 10003). There are 180 other Catholic Worker sites around the country and others in eight countries. (*The Catholic Spirit*, 5/8/08)

To coincide with the anniversary Day's diary entries from 1934-1980 are published as *The Duty of Delight* edited by Robert Ellsberg (Marquette University Press [2008], PO Box 3141, Milwaukee, WI 53201; \$42). Her thoughts center on the unemployed and their needs, on the travails of living with several good-hearted volunteers, and on her attempt to respond to God. Ed Marcinaik (1917-2004), a founder of the Catholic Worker in Chicago and a founder of our National Center for the Laity, said he most admired Day's *constancy*. That is the virtue shining through the pages of her diary.

Another anniversary book, *The Catholic Worker After Dorothy* by Dan McKanan (Liturgical Press [2008], PO Box 7500, Collegeville, MN 56312; \$19.95), gives the movement's history, some analysis and a promising look ahead.

There is a July 9-12, 2008 anniversary celebration at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel & St. Ann (53 E. Central St., Worcester, MA 01605; thereseew@gmail.com). All of the movement's regulars will attend and all others are welcome. There is no registration fee.

For its part our National Center for the Laity (PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629) distributes *The Catholic Worker Movement* by Mark and Louise Zwick (\$24) and a biography of Day, *Love Is the Measure* by Jim Forest (\$10), while supply lasts.

North American Spirituality

Bishop John Ireland (1838-1918)

Some Catholic leaders today despise U.S. culture. A few—on the left and on the right—even suggest U.S. Catholicism would be better with fewer, purer members. Ireland was emphatically opposed to such sectarianism. He optimistically preached a mutually beneficial relationship between Catholicism and U.S. society.

Ireland, writes Timothy Brunk of Villanova University, was "a major player in the Americanist movement in the church." To immigrants that wanted to retain their native language, he promoted English. He defended the U.S. separation of church and state. He insisted that Catholics get an education so they can participate fully. In particular he played a role in establishing Catholic University of America.

Admittedly, Ireland's talk of the U.S. as a "providential nation" with a dominant global role sounds today like the triumphalism that has

the U.S. in trouble in Iraq and elsewhere. But in Ireland's day U.S. Catholics were not always welcome and consequently Catholics sometimes were not active in public affairs. He was a cheerleader for his country and his church.

Brunk explains that Ireland did not favor government interference with the market and he admired U.S. individualism. But he parted ways with the strain in U.S. philosophy that feeds a selfish individualism. Said Ireland: "Society is not simply an aggregation of individuals; it is a moral entity of itself, a complete organism, having its own life." In other words, there is a relational individualism that is accountable to the common good. (*American Catholic Studies* [Spring/08], 263 S. Fourth St., Philadelphia, PA 19106)

The National Center for the Laity is wary of U.S. Catholics who defensively posit a counter-cultural faith against a defective society. The NCL favors Ireland's general approach: Applaud the aspirations of U.S. culture and only then call the U.S. to task for not living up to its ideals.

By the way, the Minnesota Historical Society (345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul, MN 55102; www.mnhs.org) is celebrating the state's 150th anniversary with, among many exhibits and events, a "Minnesota 150" list of people and places that shaped the state. Ireland is among the 150. *The Catholic Spirit* (244 Dayton Ave., St. Paul, MN 55102) asks readers to nominate 149 other Catholic places or people that significantly contributed to Minnesota history.

Rest in Peace

Robert Cronin (1915-2008)

Cronin was president of Knickerbocker Roofing (16328 Lathrop Ave., Harvey, IL 60426; www.knickroof.com), a family business founded in 1886. In the early 1950s Cronin hired three blacks: Luke, Hank and John Smothers. He immediately took them to the union hall, and in one stroke, Cronin integrated his company and the roofers union, despite criticism. His commitment to business excellence and social responsibility was soon noticed within the industry, however. He was elected president of Chicago Roofing Contractors Association (4415 W. Harrison #322, Hillside, IL 60162; www.crcra.org), a group that dates to the 1871 Chicago Fire.

Cronin was allergic to segregation his whole life. He was a member of the Chicago

Athletic Association at a time when it had a side entrance for women and a male-only main dining hall. One evening in the early 1950s Cronin and wife Mary strode through the main entrance and sat in the main area. The gender barriers there and at other Loop clubs withered.

During the mid-1960s Cronin was president of the Catholic Interracial Council. Its director was former National Center for the Laity board member, John McDermott (1926-1996). Through CIC, Cronin was successful in integrating Catholic grammar schools. In July 1961 CIC, under Cronin and McDermott, integrated Rainbow Beach on Lake Michigan. As part of its tactic CIC needed sympathetic young whites mixed among the bathers. Carol Moran, Bob and Mary's daughter, was part of the action.

About that same time Bob and Mary, with a handful of others, started a formation program for college students. "These summer evening discussions enlightened a group of students who realized there was a lot of work to do within the church and within our city to bring the faith to the marketplace," reflects former participant Bob Keeley. The Cronins kept the group together with retreats on social justice in their home over Christmas and Easter break, complete with meals, prayer, quiet reflection and a guest speaker like McDermott or Msgr. Jack Egan (1916-2001).

The NCL has stayed in business for 30 years because, in part, prominent people in Chicago and elsewhere offer sage advice and valuable contacts. When called upon, Cronin guided NCL to funding contacts, navigated NCL through Chancery and city politics, and pointed to a mission greater than any internal disagreements among NCL personalities.

Rest in Peace

Edwina Froehlich (1915-2008)

In 1946 Msgr. Reynold Hillenbrand (1904-1979) approached Froehlich and some friends about attending a specialized Catholic Action congress in Paris. She was president of Senior Business Girls, a Catholic Action cell in Chicago where, among other accomplishments, she wrote "Adam Fell for Eve," an article about women's role in God's plan.

Froehlich and companion Mary Irene Zotti used their time in Europe to study several Catholic lay groups. Froehlich decided to quit her job in favor of full-time dedication to Young Christian Workers. In 1947 she was elected as

U.S. president of YCW. She established its headquarters in Chicago.

In 1956 Froehlich and a handful of friends, including Viola Lennon of YCW, founded La Leche League (PO Box 4079, Schaumburg, IL 60168; www.lli.org). She is co-author of *Womanly Art of Breastfeeding* (Penguin, 375 Hudson St., New York, NY 10014; \$18), with sales in the millions.

Rest in Peace

Charles O'Reilly (1921-2008)

During the 1980s our National Center for the Laity monthly convened a Friday evening Cantwell Roundtable—named after NCL founder Msgr. Dan Cantwell (1915-1996). The Roundtable, either at a Loop restaurant or sometimes in an office conference room, would solve the problems of church and world. O'Reilly was a regular.

His special gifts were empiricism and action. “Don't assert that homelessness in Chicago is getting worse,” he would typically say. “Get me the data.” When someone—maybe anticipating O'Reilly's tactic—pulled a study on homelessness from her briefcase, O'Reilly would switch modes: “OK, what are we going to do about it.” He didn't mean *Let's donate some money* or *Serve a shift at a shelter*. He wanted to get inside affordable housing institutions and agitate for change.

O'Reilly was dean of social work at Loyola University Chicago for many years. He was an expert on jail reform, gerontology, aspects of World War II, having served in the U.S. Army, and several other topics. He was also a fan of Dorothy Day (1897-1980) and was involved with the Catholic Worker in Chicago.

Rest in Peace

Monroe Sullivan (1937-2008)

Sullivan began his career in the early 1960s as a caseworker for the county and as a Catholic schoolteacher. During this time he joined Chicago Conference on Religion and Race and also the Catholic Interracial Council, where he met National Center for the Laity founders Msgr. Dan Cantwell (1915-1996) and Ed Marciniak (1917-2004) and through which he was involved with Dr. Martin Luther King (1929-1968), both in Chicago and in the South.

Sullivan eventually worked for Marciniak at the Chicago Commission on

Human Relations. Along the way he got interested in job training, forming Trainco Inc. to help truck drivers and later secretaries. He was a wizard at attracting funding for these projects.

Sullivan served on many boards, including in his town of Oak Park, IL where, along with many others, he crafted a successful model of race relations. In recent years he served Interfaith Worker Justice (1020 W. Bryn Mawr #400, Chicago, IL 60660; www.iwj.org).

Rest in Peace

Richard Tim Unsworth (1939-2008)

Unsworth was a layman's layman, even though he loved brothers, sisters and priests—enough to become the first, marry the second, and be friends with lots of the third. As Brother Tim in the Congregation of Christian Brothers, he was principal of Brother Rice High School (10001 S. Pulaski, Chicago, IL 60655; www.brrice.org). There he met art teacher Sr. Jean Morman RSM. The two decided that the lay life was for them after all. They were married almost 38 years.

For 25 years Unsworth was one of the most popular columnists for the *National Catholic Reporter* (PO Box 419281, Kansas City, MO 64141), combining rapier wit with a love of the church that sent howls down the corridors of homes, workplaces and Church institutions alike. (Most of the howls were those of laughter, although there were a few screams of pain from pompous ecclesial quarters.) Unsworth was a regular fixture on Chicago news outlets, where he could be counted on to tell the truth and turn a phrase—both sometimes lacking from official Church spokespeople.

Unsworth's writing appeared in many periodicals and he wrote several books, now out-of-print. In *The Last Priest in America* (Crossroad, 1991) he profiles National Center for the Laity founder Msgr. Dan Cantwell (1915-1996) among 40 “remarkable men.” In one of 16 chapters in *Catholics On the Edge* (Crossroad, 1995) he recounts a trip he and Ed Marciniak (1917-2004), another NCL founder, made to a nursing home in Michigan where they reconnected with Arthur Falls (1901-2000). Falls, a black doctor, started the first Catholic Worker house in Chicago and changed the masthead on the movement's newspaper to include a black worker.

His latest, *Tim Unsworth: Articles from the National Catholic Reporter* went to press on

April 30, 2008, the day he died after a long illness. It is available from National Center for the Laity (PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$15).

Unsworth kept his sense of humor until the end. After one especially painful attack

shortly before he died, he looked up at Greg Pierce, former NCL president, and joked: "Maybe I should have given more to the Propagation of the Faith."

Happenings

Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good (Victoria Kovari, 19972 Shrewsbury Rd., Detroit, MI 48221; www.catholicsinalliance.org) convenes a conference in Philadelphia, July 11-13, 2008 geared toward the November 2008 election.

The Center for Economic and Social Justice (PO Box 40711, Washington, DC 20016; www.cesj.org) is arranging a conference on anti-poverty approaches. It will take place in St. Louis, August 7-9, 2008.

Peace and Justice Studies Association (2130 Fulton St. #UC 500, San Francisco, CA 94117; www.peacejusticestudies.org) sponsors a September 11-14, 2008 conference, Building Cultures of Peace, in Portland.

Peace and Justice Institute (402 S. Independence Blvd., Romeoville, IL 60446; www.paxjoliet.org) has a series of 13 talks from September 11, 2008 through April 2009. On October 9, 2008 Fr. Jonathan Foster, OFM will speak on "Social Justice Spirituality," drawing upon National Center for the Laity documents. On October 23, 2008 Fr. Gilbert Ostdiek, OFM will address "Liturgy and Justice."

The Neiswanger Institute (Loyola University, 2160 S. First Ave. #120, Maywood, IL 60153; www.bioethics.lumc.edu) has an October 9-10, 2008 conference on Contemporary Catholic Healthcare Ethics.

The Association of Presbyterian Tentmakers (1035 20th St. SW, Loveland, CO 80537; www.pcusatentmakers.com) has an October 24-26, 2008 convention in Santa Fe. A tentmaker is a clergy person who draws a salary from a workaday job and brings a worker's sensibility to pastoral and sacramental ministry.

College of St. Elizabeth (2 Convent Rd., Morristown, NJ 07960; www.cse.edu) sponsors "Spirituality and Health Care" on November 8, 2008. Bro. Daniel Sulmasy, OFM is featured speaker. There are 10 workshops.

Websites

The Manhattan Institute (52 Vanderbilt Ave., New York, NY 10017; www.manhattan-institute.org) has a report, "Measuring Immigrant Assimilation" by Jacob Vigdor, which points to challenges for Mexican-Americans and the U.S. Catholic church.

"For A New Thrift: Confronting the Debt Culture" is a statement from the Institute for American Values (1841 Broadway #211, New York, NY 10023; www.newthrift.org) that focuses on predatory-lending and easy-credit institutions. "A Nation in Debt" in *American Interest Magazine* (1730 Rhode Island Ave. #617, Washington, DC 20036; www.the-american-interest.com; 8/08) by Barbara Dafoe Whitehead develops the Institute's statement.

"For A New Thrift" was signed by 62 scholars. Some are presumably Catholic but no one appears there as a Catholic leader. Why? Do Catholic liberals consider *thrift* to be a conservative cause? Do Catholic conservatives shy away from attacking banks and other run amok financial institutions? Or possibly the Institute didn't approach Catholic leaders?

The Twomey Center for Peace through Justice (7214 St. Charles Ave. #907, New Orleans, LA 70118; www.loyno.edu/twomey), like many institutions in the Mississippi River delta, was shut down after Hurricane Katrina. But it's back with advocacy, job training, education and a terrific newsletter, *Blueprint for Social Justice*. The current issue includes an 11-page article on the environment and grassroots legal activism.

Bill McGarvey, an advisor to our National Center for the Laity, edits a website for young adult Catholics (www.bustedhalo.com) with an advice column, movie reviews, street interviews and more. McGarvey is also a musician. His CDs, including *Beautiful Mess* and *Tell Your Mother*, are available at www.billmcgarvey.com.

Bob Senser, longtime friend of our National Center for the Laity, edits an informative cyber-newsletter *Human Rights for Workers* (www.senser.com). Its blog is <http://humanrightsforworkers.blogspot.com>.

Greg Pierce, former president of our National Center for the Laity, hosts a cyberspace "Dialogue on the Spirituality of Work." Send your e-mail address to his secure site: gpierce@actapublications.com.

Fr. Sinclair Oubre (Catholic Labor Network, 1500 Jefferson Dr., Port Arthur, TX 77642; www.catholiclabor.org) hosts our National Center for the Laity website (www.catholiclabor.org/NCL.htm).

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Work is for the Worker

"Listen, when cadences of knocking hammers so much their own.

I transfer into our inner life, to test the strength of each blow.

Listen: electric current cuts through a river of rock.

Then the thought grows in me day after day,

The whole greatness of this work dwells inside a person."

-- Pope John Paul II (1920-2005)

For more thoughts and images from our late Polish pontiff about work, including another poem, purchase *Pope John Paul II's Gospel of Work* edited by Bill Droel (National Center for the Laity, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$15)