

Initiatives

In Support of Christians in the World

National Center for the Laity
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Taking the Initiative

On Guns

The goal is responsible gun ownership and responsible gun transactions. The legislative path is clogged with libertarian ideologues. Consequently, students, community leaders, executives and investors have taken other crisscrossing paths from within and through the business world.

The first of these can be called *consumer action*. Some consumers are boycotting businesses that deal with the NRA. Drain the NRA (www.drainthenra.com) has a detailed spreadsheet with addresses of targeted companies. It also has links to responsible gun-use groups, including Sandy Hook Promise and the Brady Campaign. A hub for consumer strategy is Boycott NRA (www.facebook.com/pg/boycottnra). The plan is to get the boycotted companies to push the NRA into responsible conversation. (*N.Y. Times*, 2/28/18 & *Chicago Tribune*, 2/28/18)

Other consumer/citizen groups focus on gun manufacturers. Rabbi Joel Mosbacher (Temple Shaaray Tefila, 250 E. 79th St., New York, NY 10075) and Rev. Anthony Bennett (Mount Aery Baptist, 75 Frank St., Bridgeport, CT 06604) are leaders in Metro-IAF (1226 Vermont Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20005; www.metro-iaf.org), a network of over 20 community organizations. They want manufacturers to install accident-prevention accessories on their models (called *smart guns* that can only be fired by the registered owner) and to discontinue distribution to careless retailers (called *dumb dealers*).

Bennett says he and other pastors are unhappy about “too many funerals” and heartbroken about “too many family members killed because of illegal guns.” Mosbacher is involved because in 1999 his father was murdered as he opened his small business. Metro-IAF’s gun campaign is called “Do Not Stand Idly By” (www.donotstandidlyby.org). Metro-IAF knows that a manufacturer does not listen to one or another individual. So Metro-IAF finds allies who purchase in quantity, like police departments. Then gun companies may consider safety proposals. (*N.Y. Times*, 3/4/18)

The second strategy, *corporate billiards*, occurs when executives inside their own company issue a policy that bounces a little reasonableness

over to the NRA. For example, companies in the travel industry have discontinued their discount benefit to NRA members.

First National Bank of Omaha has dropped its NRA-affiliated credit card. Citigroup (388 Greenwich St., New York, NY 10013) now restricts credit cards that it backs if the business sponsoring the card sells guns to people under-21 (with some exception) or if they sell bump stocks and other specified gun accessories. Further, those businesses cannot borrow from Citi. (*N.Y. Times*, 3/23/18 & 3/27/18)

Walmart, which is a Citi customer, now requires a gun purchaser to be at least 21 and Walmart no longer sells assault-looking toys. Nor are there under-21 sales at L.L. Bean or Kroger (aka Fred Meyer) anymore.

Several bike shops in Oregon, Recreational Equipment Inc., Mountain Equipment in Canada and Running Room in Canada no longer stock goggles, helmets, and other Vista Outdoor products. Among Vista’s nearly 50 brands, some deal in assault rifles.

Delta (PO Box 20706, Atlanta, GA 30320) stopped its discount to NRA members, but with convoluted reasoning. The decision “reflects the airline’s neutral status in the current national debate” about guns, says Delta. If the company really means *neutral*, then this is no strategy at all. (*N.Y. Times*, 2/28/18)

By contrast, Dick’s Sporting Goods (345 Court St., Coraopolis, PA 15108), whose Field & Stream stores sell guns, was clear about why no more assault rifles and no gun sales under 21. Said CEO Ed Stack, a graduate of St. John Fisher College in Pittsford, NY: “We saw what the kids [at Stoneman Douglas High School] were going through... We felt we needed to do something... We love these kids and their rallying cry: *Enough is enough*. It got to us.” (*N.Y. Times*, 3/1/18 & *Chicago Tribune*, 3/1/18, 3/23/18 & *Wall St. Journal*, 4/8/18)

The third strategy is *socially responsible investments*. Gun manufacturers and retailers can be included in an investment fund. Thus those who own or manage investments in guns can perhaps sway a company’s board and executives.

James Ryan (Merrill Lynch, 225 Liberty St., New York, NY 10281) sends along information about a handful of big investors that are leveraging for gun safety. For example, Black Rock (100

Bellevue Pkwy., Wilmington, DE 19809), through its index funds is perhaps the largest owner of gun companies in the U.S. It sent a three-page letter to the manufacturers with questions about product safety, litigation risk and more. Maybe Black Rock and others can get the manufacturers to support better background checks, smart gun technology and the like. (*Wall St. Journal*, 3/2/18 & *N.Y. Times*, 2/27/18 & 3/4/18 & 3/6/18)

Metro-IAF, mentioned earlier, favors such engagement with the gun industry, instead of divestment. Metro-IAF draws upon its 51 years of using investments as a social change tool and its familiarity with the Sullivan Principles, first used in 1977 to address apartheid in South Africa. It has principles for responsible gun manufacturing and ownership that will guide negotiations.

Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility (475 Riverside Dr. #1842, New York, NY 10115; www.iccr.org) is likewise an expert on engaging companies from the inside, doing so since 1971. Its members own stock in Sturm Ruger, American Outdoor Brands and other gun companies in order to dialogue with management about safety.

Taking the Initiative In Retail

Maybe the argument is stated backwards: Retail business is so precarious that managers cannot afford to provide stable schedules to clerks. Or could it be that retail is on the shakes because employees don't get predictable schedules?

Despite the closing of some familiar stores, retail employment is growing, accounting for about 12% of the private sector. Employee turnover is high. By one estimate, a typical worker is gone before one year. However, within a few days that same worker lands a job at another retail store.

About half of retail employees are part-time; anywhere from 16 to 29 hours per week. They receive few benefits and about 45% need some government assistance. Both part-timers and full-timers are often on flexible schedules. Though there are restrictions in some places, retail workers can be scheduled as *stand-by*; required to carry their phone with no pay. The manager can call them in and then send them home again if store traffic diminishes. (*Job Quality and Economic Opportunity in Retail*, Center for Popular Democracy, 449 Troutman St. #A, Brooklyn, NY 11237; www.popularpocracy.org)

There is some evidence, reports Eduardo Porter, that the value added per well-treated retail employee is greater than the expense of a higher wage and benefits. *Where Bad Jobs Are Better* by

Francoise Carre and Chris Tilly (Russell Sage Foundation [2017], 112 E. 64th St., New York, NY 10065; \$35) looks at retail jobs in Germany, England and other countries. The U.S. turnover rate is twice that as elsewhere and twice as many U.S. retail workers get a poverty wage as elsewhere. (*N.Y. Times*, 11/29/17)

More evidence favoring dignified scheduling comes from Gap (2 Folsom St., San Francisco, CA 94105). The company asked three independent professors to monitor an experiment. The corporate office told managers at two-thirds of the Gap stores (randomly selected) to give clerks a specific and consistent start and stop time day-to-day and a consistent schedule week-to-week. Managers at the other third of Gap stores received no instructions. Sales at the consistent schedule stores went up 7%. No change at the other stores. Gap, by the way, has not yet committed to any new policies because of the experiment. (*N.Y. Times*, 3/28/18)

Taking the Initiative With Tips

Boorish customers harass waitresses and bartenders because of their leverage in our tip culture, goes the argument. Thus the elimination of tips might improve behavior in the restaurant/bar.

Restaurant service is a growing employment category. About 70% of table servers are women and about 50% are under 25. About 60% of bartenders are women. Usually there is no union. The only human resource department is the owner/manager. Some managers are unwilling to lose customers by enforcing *zero tolerance* on harassment.

Both workers and customers should be aware that no evidence links attentive service to better tips. However, attractive women get better tips.

What's the background to tips in restaurants? A federal *tip credit* provision allows restaurant owners to pay a *subminimum wage* with the expectation that the tip will bring the worker up to or beyond the minimum. The subminimum dollar amount was frozen in 1996. Several states, aware that the 1996 federal amount is not adequate, have raised their own subminimum or even made it equal to the state's regular minimum. Thus there is disparity among states: The pre-tip subminimum wage in Arizona is \$7.50 but in West Virginia it is \$2.62.

Several restaurants have voluntarily eliminated tips. They raise wages and menu prices. Restaurant Opportunities Center (275 Seventh Ave. #1730, New York, NY 10001; www.rocunited.org) wants all tipping eliminated, provided a family wage is the norm. Restaurant Workers of America (PO Box

304, Freeport, ME 04032; www.restaurantworkersofamerica.org), by contrast, wants tipping to remain. (*N.Y. Times*, 3/12/18 & *Union Advocate* [2/18], 353 W. Seventh St. #201, St. Paul, MN 55102)

INITIATIVES' own survey (at one or another bar after Saturday evening Mass) finds mixed opinion. The weekend crowd, the servers say, is an argument for tips; slower evenings argue for a set wage. Nearly all the table servers say that the bigger challenge is getting 40 hours.

In another chapter of the tip topic, President Donald Trump, who is also a restaurant owner, has for now dropped a proposal to give managers access to and use of tips. The proposal would apply only in restaurants where all the pre-tip wages are \$7.25 or better.

Currently a server is individually allotted all of his or her tips. Or, the servers in a restaurant or bar can put all the tips in a common jar or box or the like. Then, once a day or once a week they divide the tips, using a formula they devise. Often the servers give a portion of their tips to cooks and/or busboys—though this is done *off the record*. The manager cooperates by including credit card tips in the jar, but the manager does not control the tips. (*Chicago Tribune*, 12/8/17, 2/11/18, 4/2/18 & *Chicago Sun Times*, 2/12/18 & *N.Y. Times*, 12/22/17, 2/5/18, 3/24/18)

You thought the complexity of Saturday dinner was only about selecting the prime rib and baked potato. Smile.

Taking the Initiative *Among Businesspeople*

Ignatian Business Chapters, a network of support groups for businesspeople, is now part of Renew International (1232 George St., Plainfield, NJ 07062; www.ignatianbusinesschapters.org). IBC was formerly known as Woodstock Business Conference. John Fontana, former National Center for the Laity board member, continues as director of IBC.

With its Jesuit pedigree and drawing in particular from Fr. Bernard Lonergan, SJ (1904-1984), IBC has a method and resources to assist a group of businesspeople. A Jesuit connection, by the way, is not required of participants.

The latest IBC resource is *Balancing Faith & Work* by Stephen Connor; \$18.95. It is a 12-session discussion guide.

Connor's book is "based on the insights of Chris Lowney," who is the author of *Heroic Leadership* (Loyola Press [2005], 3441 N. Ashland Ave., Chicago, IL 60657; \$16.95) and *Everyone Leads* (Rowman & Littlefield [2017], 4501 Forbes

Bld. #200, Lanham, MD 20706; \$24.95). Lowney fits within the *pop-management* genre. That is, readers can find useful items scattered here and there.

For its part our NCL distributes *Spirituality of Work: Businesspeople* through the Pastoral Center in California (www.pastoralcenter.com/work.html). The original booklet is out-of-print, but a cyber-copy can be downloaded for 97 cents. It is arranged in six sections for support group use. Several other NCL publications are also found on the Pastoral Center website.

Work Prayers

For Journalists

"Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Help us to recognize the evil latent in a communication that does not build communion. Help us to remove the venom from our judgments. Help us to speak about others as our brothers and sisters.

You are faithful and trustworthy; may our words be seeds of goodness for the world: Where there is shouting, let us practice listening; Where there is confusion, let us inspire harmony; Where there is ambiguity, let us bring clarity; Where there is exclusion, let us offer solidarity; Where there is sensationalism, let us use sobriety; Where there is superficiality, let us raise real questions;

Where there is prejudice, let us awaken trust; Where there is hostility, let us bring respect; Where there is falsehood, let us bring truth. Amen."

--Pope Francis, "Message for World Communications Day," May 13, 2018

125+ Years

Of Catholic Social Thought

Each person has dignity. That is the starting point for Catholic social thought. Dignity cannot be separated, nor given away, nor taken away. For example, no boss--no matter how progressive--gives dignity to any worker. No child grows in dignity by having terrific parents or attending an enlightening seminar. Each person's built-in dignity, as expressed in our country's *Declaration of Independence*, is associated with "certain unalienable rights" or claims, including the right to life.

Back in the day, many pro-life leaders were solid Democrats and most were Catholic, details Daniel Williams in *Defenders of the Unborn: the Pro-Life Movement before Roe v. Wade* (Oxford

University Press [2016], 2001 Evans Rd., Cary, NC 27513; \$31.95). These leaders drew upon the New Deal and upon natural law. They used “the same language of human rights [and] civil rights” as found in the movements for racial justice and equal opportunity for women at that time. Further, these leaders, as Democrats, believed that government has a positive role to play in protecting rights and in delivering services to the needy, says Williams.

Not all Catholic Democrats were vocal about pro-life. But the pro-life list included Sargent Shriver (1915-2011), Eunice Shriver (1921-2009), Thomas Eagleton (1929-2007), Edmund Muskie (1914-1996) and yes, Ted Kennedy (1932-2009). Likewise, some Catholic bishops who supported progressive causes also spoke against abortion, including Thomas Gumbleton of Detroit and Cletus O'Donnell (1917-1992) of Madison. Meanwhile, some prominent Republicans were speaking in favor of abortion. And, in another surprise from Williams, “evangelicals largely eschewed the pro-life movement” prior to 1973. They were uneasy about associating with anything that felt Catholic or simply did not give much attention to social issues, focusing instead on individual faith expression.

The core of pro-life Catholic Democrats gradually created a “bipartisan, ecumenical coalition” with mainline Protestants, Williams continues. Despite some setbacks, this coalition won victories at the state level and saw results from its educational efforts. To furnish one example, 10,000 people rallied in late 1972 in New York City against a proposed state law. By 1972 the pro-life movement (still attracting liberals and Catholics) had defeated pro-abortion legislation in 25 states.

On January 22, 1973 the Supreme Court rendered its fateful decision regarding *Roe vs. Wade*. The argument that “women had an absolute right to choose not to be pregnant” took off. New pro-life alliances emerged, particularly with evangelical groups. After January 1973 liberals mostly gave up the pro-life cause; some switched positions. And, the new pro-life movement spent little energy on retaining liberals.

Likewise, liberals now seem uninterested in pro-life groups. For example, one day after the January 20, 2017 inauguration of President Donald Trump nearly one-half million walked in a Woman’s March on Washington. Nationwide total participation reached perhaps four million. Various groups had *partnership status* for this historic protest. A pro-life group from Texas, however, had their partnership status revoked. A chairwoman of the march explained: “If you want to come to the march you are coming with the understanding that you respect a woman’s right to choose.” (*N.Y. Times*, 1/19/17)

There are a few groups that connect pro-life and feminism; pro-life and civil rights. Among those groups: Consistent Life (PO Box 9295, Silver Spring, MD 20916; www.consistentlifework.org) which opposes poverty, the death penalty and abortion plus Democrats for Life (10521 Judicial Dr. #200, Fairfax, VA 22030; www.democratsforlife.org) which promotes candidates who support progressive issues and who include pro-life in their platforms.

North American Spirituality

Fr. John Pete Corridan, SJ (1911-1984)

New Jersey wants to end the Waterfront Commission of NY Harbor (333 Thornall St. #301, Edison, NJ 08837). Congress formed it in 1953 “for the purpose of eliminating various evils,” namely corrupt labor practices in and around the NJ/NY waterfront. Both the International Longshoremen’s Association and the NY Shipping Association think matters have improved enough since the 1950s that the Commission is unnecessary. Several others disagree. (*N.Y. Times*, 1/18/18)

The corrupt practices were portrayed in the classic 1954 film, *On the Waterfront*. It was written by Budd Schulberg (1914-2009) and directed by Elia Kazan (1909-2003). The film’s protagonist was played by Marlon Brando (1924-2004). Eva Marie Saint won an Oscar for her role. There is a priest in the film, played by Karl Malden (1912-2009).

Corridan was the priest in real life. Along with Fr. Phillip Carey, SJ (1907-1989), he ran Xavier Labor School. It operated from 1936-1988.

For various durations starting in the 1930s there were over 80 such labor schools. The Jesuits and other religious orders, sometimes in conjunction with a college, led some. Others were led by a diocesan office; a handful by the Knights of Columbus; several were parish-based. Some chapters of the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists, which began in February 1937, also sponsored labor schools. The Catholic Labor Alliance, formed here in Chicago in March 1943, sponsored a labor school. (Our NCL is a descendant of CLA. For a list of the old labor schools see *Wage Theft in America* by Kim Bobo, NCL, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$5.50.)

The general idea was to provide leadership training to young workers. There were classes on collective bargaining, history and Catholic social thought. The schools did not organize unions, but they encouraged workers to get involved in their respective unions. There is only one school left from the old days, the Boston Labor Guild (66 Brooks Dr., Braintree, MA 02184; www.laborguild.com). Its

Spring 2018 classes include “Building Effective Coalitions,” “Communication Skills to Resolve Conflict” and others.

Schulberg knew of Corridan by way of a 1949 *New York Sun* expose about waterfront crime. Corridan was not enthusiastic about a screenplay. We’re doing some tough organizing down there and we don’t need a Hollywood movie, he initially told Schulberg.

It was *tough* on the docks because hiring was arbitrary and included daily kickbacks. Beatings were common. But Corridan knew of additional risks. Xavier Labor School and its counterparts, including NCL’s predecessor Catholic Labor Alliance, were struggling for the soul of our church. Some of the corrupt union leaders and corrupt shipping executives were Catholics who were given seats of honor at banquets and the like. Should U.S. Catholicism and our Chancery leaders bet the future on these prominent people or on rough-and-tumble dockworkers who might sin once in awhile?

At the climax of the film a goon menacingly yells at the priest: “Go back to your church, Father.” The priest’s reply is a paraphrase of a talk Corridan gave in 1948 to a Knights of Columbus communion breakfast. “I suppose some people would smirk at the thought of Christ in the shape [waterfront hiring system]. It is about as absurd as the fact that Christ redeemed all men irrespective of race, color or station in life,” Corridan said. “So Christ is in the shape...as sure as every man there in the state of grace is his brother... Christ works on a pier and his back aches because there are a fair number of [mob] boys on the pier. They don’t work but have their rackets at which so many may wink.”

For a full history of the film and of Xavier Labor School, get *On the Irish Waterfront* by James Fisher (National Center for the Laity, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$10).

Rest in Peace

Mary Ellen Konieczny (1959-2018)

The Buffalo Bills had a few good NFL seasons in the 1980s, and conference championships in the early 1990s. No matter their record, Konieczny, a native of Buffalo’s Polonia, was loyal. Even as the Bills were on their way to losing a fourth Super Bowl in a row (#28 on January 30, 1994), Konieczny was preparing a Buffalo cuisine here in Chicago: beef-on-wick and wings (prepared properly), plus she scored some Upstate beer.

Brilliant, down-to-earth, tenacious, funny, a true woman of the church. She was a spouse and

mother, who with Chris Chwedyk, a Chicago-based architectural consultant, raised two sons.

Konieczny was a Notre Dame undergrad. She then signed-on with Holy Cross Associates and was assigned to a parish in Portland. Along with the others, she soon realized that this *urban plunge* was as much an immersion into one’s self and one’s colleagues as into a city.

The sociology of religion is relatively new. In fact, a bishop—not too far from Konieczny’s home—once told his seminarians not to be distracted by sociology. Konieczny, by contrast, believed that all the sciences can serve the church. After earning a doctorate in social science from the University of Chicago and upon landing a teaching appointment at University of Notre Dame, she thoroughly analyzed parish life. (See “Studying Catholic Parishes” in *American Catholic Studies* [Spring/18], 263 S. Fourth St., Philadelphia, PA 19106)

In *The Spirit’s Tether: Family, Work and Religion Among American Catholics* (Oxford University Press [2013], 2001 Evans Rd., Cary, NC 27513; \$33.95) Konieczny compares two parishes--their demographics, their activities, their respective stories and more. Each, as it turns out, gives a different accent to marriage, childrearing, and the balance between work and family life. Both parishes are fully Catholic, but the tone in each influences how members think about and act in the public arena. The normal practices of a parish can implicitly add to polarization in the wider society, she concludes.

This did not please Konieczny and in *Polarization in the U.S. Catholic Church* (Liturgical Press [2016], PO Box 7500, Collegeville, MN 56321; \$24.49) she and others argue for an inclusive Catholicism. Conflict is necessary, she says, and can be “a healthy part” of our interaction. But when U.S. Catholicism turns to “issues of gender, sexuality and authority,” differences quickly become “unproductive and intractable.”

Instead of “genuine engagement and dialogue” the factions in the church clog up Catholic media, especially cyber-publications; they waste the time of bishops and pastors who have not learned to ignore special pleaders; they provide one more reason for young adults’ indifference to all things Catholic; and they accomplish little or nothing in advancing their position, much less the gospel. It is all the more frustrating, as Konieczny writes, that “only a small minority of the population occupy truly polar positions.” The so-called *culture wars* “are waged largely by elites,” miles away from the daily concerns of rank-and-file Catholics.

Konieczny took her cues about dialogue from Cardinal Joseph Bernardin (1928-1996). She worked in his administration for nine years, including

as a terrific director of campus ministry. She consistently convened faith forums that did not “fit neatly into political categories of right and left,” forums where Catholics could talk plainly about their concerns and envision bridges over the walls.

Moment by moment we are given this time to live and then in one moment it is all taken away... or so it seems... though only momentarily.

Happenings and Resources

National Center for the Laity is co-sponsoring a July 5-7, 2018 conference on Lay Movements and the Legacy of Cardinal Joseph Leo Cardijn (1882-1967) of Belgium. The venue and principal sponsor is Mt. St. Joseph University (5701 Delhi Rd., Cincinnati, OH 45233; robert.pennington@msj.edu). To join us, hit the *registration* prompt on www.lay-movements-structures-grace.blogspot.com.au.

St. John Paul II (1920-2005) gave a talk at Cardijn’s grave in Brussels on May 19, 1985. Cardijn’s “original and courageous intuition,” said John Paul II, was to put Christian responsibility “into the hands of young workers.” Cardijn’s pastoral approach anticipated Vatican II (1962-1965), John Paul II continued. He was convinced that “with good and suitable training” young adults are “capable of being apostles to their brothers and sisters” at work and at school.

John Paul II reminded the young people in Belgium that God’s intervention in ancient Egypt was due to oppressive labor conditions, which persist today. Say *no* to so-called economic solutions that “cause an increase of inequality in Belgium” and elsewhere, he said.

Some Catholics today—on the left and on the right—use Church documents in a fundamentalist way. At Cardijn’s grave John Paul II gave such people this instruction: Catholicism “does not offer precise technical solutions nor strategies for action” in each specific instance. But rely on the church’s social thought and prudently apply Catholic principles, particularly *solidarity*, *justice* and *participation*, on the job and in the community “in behalf of the dignity of the person and the meaning of work.”

On March 21-23, 2019 NCL will be in Notre Dame co-sponsoring another conference titled “Opting for the Poor.”

In January 1979 St. John Paul II (1920-2005) made his first overseas journey, spending several days in Latin America. He stopped in a poor barrio of Guadalajara and said, “The pope loves you because you are God’s favorites.” On that trip he also inaugurated a meeting of Latin American bishops. Their report from the meeting, called the *Puebla Document*, draws upon Vatican II (1962-1965) and a prior meeting in Columbia. The *Puebla Document* propelled the Catholic social principle, *preferential option for the poor*. That same meeting, by the way, also introduced the social principle *preferential option for young people*. That phrase, however, has not (at least not yet) caught on like *option for the poor*.

The principal sponsor for the March 21-23, 2019 conference is Center for Social Concerns (228 Geddes Hall, Notre Dame, IN 46556; www.socialconcerns.nd.edu).

Sr. Ann Ida Gannon, BVM, age 103, is, as of April 28, 2018, a member of Irish American Hall of Fame (4626 N. Knox Ave., Chicago, IL 60630; www.iahof.org). She was president at Mundelein College (now part of Loyola University) from 1957 to 1975. She was among those leaders who anticipated and then implemented Vatican II (1963-1965) here in Chicago. She was involved in important social movements, both locally and nationally. The Gannon Center for Women & Leadership (1032 W. Sheridan Rd., Chicago, IL 60660; www.luc.edu/gannon) has a booklet, *Sr. Ann Ida Gannon, BVM* by Robert Aguirre. Other booklets in the Gannon Center series include *Sr. Carol Frances Jegen, BVM* by Prudence Moylan; *Peggy Roach (1927-2006)* by Nicholas Patricca; *Sr. Anne Carr, BVM (1934-2008)* by Robert Doud and *Patty Crowley (1913-2005)* by your INITIATIVES’ editor, Bill Droel.

Bishop John Ireland (1838-1918), during this 100th anniversary of his death, is the subject of an exhibit at Cathedral of St. Paul (239 Selby Ave., St. Paul MN 55102; www.cathedralsaintpaul.org).

Nowadays some U.S. Catholic leaders are fixated on negatives. Our culture has abandoned decency, they say. Or, religious liberty is no longer respected. Or, the culture does not revere the sacred. Young adults do not worship, these leaders say, because they have succumbed to *secularism*. Ireland, in contrast to the culture despisers, had an optimistic personality and, though aware of the culture’s defects, he accented the positive.

Ireland’s phrases can sound a bit over-the-top nowadays, but his general thrust is appealing. There is no major discord between Catholicism and the U.S. experiment in democracy, he repeatedly said. Although Catholicism does not baptize any one government, he wrote in 1893, “I say that the government of the people, by the people and for the people is [a government] under which the Catholic church, the church of the people, breathes air

most congenial to her mind and heart.” Do not, Ireland continued, “lose time in thinking of opposition... In every historic transition there are reactionaries who would feign push back into [Lake] Erie the waters of Niagara.”

Nowadays a small number of U.S. Catholics, also starting with society’s negatives, promote a sectarian option. A pure remnant should retreat from the corrupt world, they say, and thereby make Catholicism great again. Here’s Ireland in an 1889 talk at the first U.S. Lay Catholic Congress: “It is deplorable that Catholics grow timid, take refuge in sanctuary and cloister, and leave the bustling, throbbing world with its miseries and sins to the wiles of false friends.” Such sectarians are content to “say their prayers,” he concluded. If they ever do get involved, “it is at the 11th hour...when public opinion has already been formed.” The better strategy, said Ireland, is get “into the arena, priest and layman. Seek out social evils and lead in movements that tend to rectify them.”

For a biography get *John Ireland and the American Catholic Church* by Fr. Marvin O’Connell (1930-2016) from Minnesota Historical Society (345 Kellogg Blvd., St. Paul, MN 55102; \$32.95).

Everyone in INITIATIVES’ neighborhood calls it “the Nabisco plant.” But charting who makes Lorna Doone or Fig Newton or Cheez It (INITIATIVES’ favorite) or Jello-O Pudding Pops requires a chart more complex than an NCAA basketball tournament bracket. Short version: Nabisco merged with Kraft in 2000; then Kraft split into two companies in 2011. The snack company is called Mondelez (3 Parkway North Blvd. #300, Deerfield, IL 60015). More details are in *Barbarians at the Gate* by Bryan Burrough (Harper Collins [2009], 1350 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10019; \$17.99).

In early 2016 Mondelez (aka Nabisco) laid off about 600 neighborhood workers. Their main union is Bakery and Confectionery Workers International (10401 Connecticut Ave. #400, Kensington, MD 20895; www.fightforamericanjobs.org). The production of Oreos and other products was moved to Mexico, where the pay is about \$1.50 per hour. This prompted then candidate Donald Trump to repeatedly attack Nabisco. He pledged, if elected, to restore the jobs. He hasn’t delivered as yet; in fact, more layoffs are occurring.

Interfaith Worker Justice (1020 W. Bryn Mawr Ave., Chicago, IL 60660; www.iwj.org) studied the Nabisco situation and released a report, *Breaking Faith: Outsourcing and the Damage Done to Our Communities*. It concludes that Nabisco treats “working people like any other ingredient that goes into making its products.” IWJ asks consumers to boycott Oreos and other Nabisco/Mondelez products that carry a “Made in Mexico” label.

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NCL, founded in 1978, is an independent 501-C-3 Catholic organization with a State of Illinois charter.

NCL board members include Tom Donnelly, Chuck DiSalvo, Bill Droel, John Hazard, Frosty Pipal, Terry Mambu Rasch and Lauren Sukal.

“Mercy is called justice because the giver knows that God has given all things to all in common—that the sun rises for all, the rain falls on all, and God has given the earth for all. On that account the giver shares with those who do not have the abundance of the earth... [People] are just therefore who do not retain anything for themselves alone, knowing that everything has been given to all... [Thus] it is not from your own property that you give to the poor. Rather, you make a return from what is theirs... The earth belongs to all, not to the rich. Therefore you are paying a debt, not bestowing charity.” --St. Ambrose of Milan (340-397)

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