

<h1 style="color: green;">Initiatives</h1> <p style="color: green;">In Support of Christians in the World</p>	National Center for the Laity PO Box 291102 Chicago, IL 60629 www.catholiclabor.org	October 2020 Number 254
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Covid-19

The corona virus is not the only epidemic. Over the past two decades, deaths from suicide, drug overdose and alcoholism have risen dramatically. Life expectancy has fallen three years in a row.

Atul Gwande, a surgeon and public health researcher, highlights the causes in *The New Yorker* (1 World Trade Center, New York, NY 10007; 3/23/20). He draws upon *Deaths of Despair and the Future of Capitalism* by Ann Case, a Princeton economist, and Angus Deaton, a Nobel Prize winner (Princeton University Press [2020]; \$27.95).

Deaths of Despair reveals that while college graduates are becoming healthier and wealthier, those without a degree face increasing desperation. The notable rise in deaths from suicide, alcohol and drug-related causes occurs among working-age whites without a degree.

The two economists demonstrate how the U.S. economy creates an “epidemic of despair.” By their analysis, the usual factors do not adequately account for the crisis. The misuse of opioids, in Gwande’s words, “did not create the conditions for despair. Instead, it appears, the oversupply fed upon a white working class already adrift.” Case and Deaton say neither the opioid epidemic nor the rising incidence of obesity, extreme poverty or income inequality fully explains the surprisingly high death rate of middle-aged people. They also debunk the cultural argument that laziness and decadence are fueling addiction, hopelessness and suicide.

There is, however, a strong economic correlation between these deaths and the local percentage of unemployed. Places with higher unemployment have higher rates of deaths of despair, an especially sobering finding given Covid-19 joblessness. Further, employment for workers without a college degree often involves “gig work, temporary contracting, or day labor, and is less likely to come with benefits like health insurance.” Additionally, our economy embraces automation and globalization, causing job displacement with little support.

Further compounding the problem are fewer cushioning resources due to decline in the marriage rate, to unstable families and to depleted religious institutions and labor unions.

Gwande notes the “unusually casual access to means of death” in the U.S., namely the ready availability of opioids and firearms.

A huge, unexpected, detrimental factor is our society’s ill-serving healthcare system. Case and Deaton indict it for reliance on employer-provided insurance. A business that employs the lower skilled has to consider healthcare premiums. “The system practically begs employers to reduce the number of lower skilled workers they hire, by outsourcing or automating their positions,” Gwande says.

Case and Deaton argue that the healthcare debacle itself is a primary reason for the rising number of deaths of despair. To stop undermining employment prospects for the working class, we must change the way healthcare is accessed. They note that in other advanced economies healthcare is paid for through wage-based taxes.

Deaths of Despair contends that our economy is designed for the educated and penalizes the rest. Gwande agrees, especially the emphasis on healthcare as a contributing factor to the crisis. He concludes: “Because economic policy is inseparable from healthcare policy, the unfairness of the healthcare system is inseparable from the unfairness of the economy—an unfairness measured not only in dollars but in deaths. The blighted prospects of the less educated are a public health crisis, and, as the number of victims mounts, it will be harder to ignore.”

Taking the Initiative

With Housing

“Location, location, location,” is the realtors’ mantra. It means the value of a home is in the land, secondarily in the structure. Because a home cannot easily be moved to an upscale neighborhood the fallback strategy is humor. For example, Rumpole of the Bailey refers to his modest abode as “the Mansion in Froxbury

Court.” Your INITIATIVES’ editor refers to his “mansion bungalow in Midway East.” Well, it is east of Midway Airport and the house is a sturdy bungalow on a pleasant block. However, there are no mansions and no speculator hypes the area as Midway East or Mississippi River East.

Land ownership, especially in the case of owning multiple parcels, is a cause of inequality between land owners and working-class renters.

What can be done? One largely unknown strategy is a *community land trust*. “There are now 260 of them in the U.S.,” writes Audrea Lim in *Harper’s* (666 Broadway, New York, NY 10012; 7/20).

A CLT is usually used to establish affordable housing and prevent speculators from contributing to displacement. However, the first CLT, begun in the 1960s, was not urban. Lim visited New Communities (801 Old Pretoria Rd., Albany, GA 31721; www.newcommunitiesinc.com) to see sustainable farming of squash, zucchini, pecan and other crops by Black families. Equity Trust (592 Main St., Amherst, MA 01004; www.equitytrust.org) is another CLT that deals with farms.

Here’s the strategy: A CLT acquires a rural tract or multiple plots in a neighborhood. The trust is bound by its chartered vision. The trust uses grants or loans to get the land, sometimes out of foreclosure. It also gets municipal-owned lots that are abandoned, often for a small price. A few cities even throw development money into the deal. National Housing Trust (1101 30th St. NW #100A, Washington, DC 20007; www.nationalhousingtrust.org) and its partner, Institute for Community Economics (www.community-wealth.org), can help the CLT find funds and other resources.

A family owns an affordable house or small business on the land—*affordable* because they are not buying land. The structures can increase in resale value. They can be inherited, but the land cannot be sold to speculators, Lim explains.

Champlain Housing (88 King St., Burlington, VT 05401; www.getahome.org), begun in 1984, is the largest CLT “with 620 owner-occupied homes,” Lim writes.

Dudley St. Neighborhood Initiative (550 Dudley St., Roxbury, MA 02119; www.dsni.org) is a second successful example. Begun in 1984, it controls development and mitigates displacement in the area.

Boston Neighborhood Community Land Trust (www.cohif.org) is a coalition of about 25 tenant groups and others, including the Archdiocese of Boston.

Mott Haven Port Morris Community Land Stewards, a project of South Bronx Unite (www.southbronxunite.org), has recently acquired 22 parcels for affordable housing.

Several CLTs belong to a consortium, National Community Land Trust Network, recently absorbed into Grounded Solutions Network (PO Box 70724, Oakland, CA 94612; www.groundedolutions.org).

Taking the Initiative *In the Fields*

“I would like to go and glean grain in the field of anyone who will allow me.” (*Ruth* 2:2)

There are over 200 gleaning groups in the U.S. whose volunteers retrieve leftover crops and distribute food to the needy. Rachel Wharton, writing in *N.Y. Times* (7/8/20), profiles some and explains the procedure, particularly their efforts during Covid-19.

Most farmers are OK with the practice and with Covid-19 many farmers eagerly welcome this alternative to destroying the harvest. There is now a USDA (1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20250; www.ams.usda.gov) subsidy for farms that donate, called Farmers to Families.

Wharton highlights a few gleaning groups and cooperating farms. Farmers Against Hunger is a division of the NJ Agricultural Society (1200 Florence Columbus Rd., Bordentown, NJ 08505; www.njagsociety.org). GleanSLO (1180 Kendall Rd., San Luis Obispo, CA 93401; www.gleanslo.org) hosts regular fruit gathering parties. Because of Covid-19 it has expanded operations into large fields of blueberries and more. Society of St. Anthony (3383 Sweet Hollow Rd., Big Island, VA 24526; www.endhunger.org) has groups in nine states. It also offers Bible study booklets focused on hunger. After the Harvest (406 W. 34th St. #816, Kansas City, MO 64111; www.aftertheharvestkc.org), again because of Covid-19, gleans the best vegetables, not just leftovers.

The movement is sophisticated. Each group, often led by a young adult, maintains a list of volunteers, of welcoming farmers and of needy families or pantries. Bakeries and other

food processors might participate. Many of the groups belong to Association of Gleaning Organizations (1140 S. 1100 E., Salt Lake City, UT 84105; www.gleaningorgs.com). It has a resource library, hosts monthly telephone meetings and sponsors conferences.

All of the gleaning groups can use volunteers and donations. Yes, there is likely one near you.

“You who have no money, come buy grain and eat; come buy grain without money, wine and milk without cost.” (*Isaiah* 55:1)

Taking the Initiative *With Science*

Using the unfortunate example of Galileo Galilei (1564-1642), many allege hostility between Catholicism and science. But Catholicism, like other Christian denominations (with the exception of some evangelicals) and like Judaism and Islam, considers science/reason as a gift from God and supports scientists. For sure, there are reasonable disputes over techniques and some avenues of application. Yet in Catholicism faith and reason are not implacable enemies.

“How the Church Fostered Science and Technology” is the theme for the latest edition of *Christian History* (PO Box 540, Worcester, PA 19490; www.christianhistoryinstitute.org).

The magazine notes contributions from many Catholics, including St. Thomas Aquinas, OP (1225-1274), Fr. Georges “Big Bang” Lemaitre (1894-1966), Thomas Bradwardine (1300-1349) plus full essays on St. Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179), St. Albert the Great (1200-1280) and Fr. Rodger Bacon, OFM (1219-1292). Protestants include Johannes Kepler (1571-1630), Michael Faraday (1791-1867) on electromagnetic discoveries and George Washington Carver (1864-1943) of Alabama on agriculture.

The early Puritans were not anti-science. They generally saw it as “an opportunity to understand God as Creator with greater depth,” writes Jennifer Powell McNutt in *Christian History*. Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) and others “embraced the Newtonian worldview that God can work through secondary causes.”

Cotton Mather (1663-1728), minister at North Church in Boston, pioneered inoculating against a virus, McNutt says. Many clergy and some doctors, knowing little about germs,

thought an epidemic was divine punishment. In about 1715 Onesimus, a slave to Mather, explained an African practice of inserting disease material into a healthy person in order to counteract a virus. When in 1721 small pox came to Boston from the West Indies, Mather advocated for the controversial immunization.

Christian History concludes with a conversation among four scientists who are serious about their faith—one from the National Institute of Health, a Nobel Prize winner, an atmospheric scientist and an epidemiologist. Many more forums are needed for researchers, science teachers, doctors and others to explore the meaning of their work in light of their faith.

Institute for Theological Encounter with Science (20 Archbishop May Dr., St. Louis, MO 63119; www.faithscience.org), founded in 1966, is a Catholic forum. Sebastian Mahfood, vice-president at Holy Apostles College and Seminary, serves on the ITEST board. He is also a leader at Encounter Books (www.enroutebooksandmedia.com) which has a division on science and religion titles. Its latest is *Can Science and Religion Live Together* by Gerald Verschuuren; \$18.95.

Taking the Initiative *On Race Relations*

Mitch Landrieu, former mayor of New Orleans, says racism is not “any one person’s fault.” Racism in a sense can be “something that you did not necessarily do... Simply having white privilege does not make you racist.” Nor does addressing racism mean taking “from you to give to someone else.”

However, each person is on for improvement—all of us, white and Black. Fr. Harry Tompson, SJ (1936-2007) taught Landrieu: “You have a responsibility, even if you don’t want to do something, even if you’re not at fault... Go where you can do the most good for the most people in the shortest amount of time and run to the fire and not be afraid to fail.”

Racism is about systems, Landrieu continues. The racial walls and barriers are designed and maintained by “our institutions, our businesses, our corporate structures.” For example, government designed racism into home ownership through redlining and policies on federal loan guarantees. (See *The Color of Law* by Richard Rothstein, W.W. Norton [2017]; \$23.95.)

“By design,” Landrieu says, there is racism in wage scales, in drug incarceration disparity, in education opportunity and more.

Landrieu has launched E Pluribus Unum Fund (www.unumfund.org). It started in an unusual way. Instead of designing a program and then marketing it, Landrieu and his team spent one year listening, one-to-one and in small groups to about 800 people. They traveled the South asking questions about separation and “the modern legacy of Jim Crow.” The Fund is now poised to suggest ideas.

“We may not all be at fault for why things are, but we all have a responsibility to act now, to help this nation and our communities heal,” Landrieu concludes.

His short talk was in honor of Fr. Louis Twomey, SJ (1905-1969) at Jesuit Social Research Institute (6363 St. Charles Ave. #94, New Orleans, LA 70118; www.loyno.edu/jsri) and is printed in *Blueprint for Social Justice* (5/20), an occasional newsletter of JSRI.

Taking the Initiative *Assisting the Unemployed*

Saving Workers' Health is a toolkit about legal rights and job safety during Covid-19. Get it at <https://bit.ly/LessinToolkit>.

For state-by-state links to unemployment, housing and food assistance programs, type www.aflcio.org/covid-19.

National Council for Occupational Safety lists resources on workers' comp, sick leave, PPE, cleaning chemicals and more. Type www.coshnetwork.org/SP-coronavirus. (*Labor Notes* [6/20], 7435 Michigan Ave., Detroit, MI 48210; www.labornotes.org)

125+ Years *Of Catholic Social Thought*

Catholicism can endorse universal basic income as a way to increase economic participation, writes Kate Ward of Marquette University. UBI is not a mandatory Catholic position, presuming “we can come up with better ways to boost the economy, support families and get needy people help.” (*U.S. Catholic* [7/20], 205 W. Monroe St., Chicago, IL 60606)

Businessman and former presidential candidate Andrew Yang explains that UBI means a monthly \$1,000 government check to every U.S. adult. A means test is absent from some versions of UBI while others have an

income cutoff. The program is funded through a value-added tax, says Yang. Most UBI proposals also reduce or eliminate some current government benefits. (*Chicago Tribune*, 7/6/20)

The Covid-19 relief checks, authorized by Congress in March 2020, are a trial run at UBI. Evidence suggests that those checks worked. They did “much to protect the needy,” reports Jason DeParle in *N.Y. Times* (6/23/20). One study concludes that without the relief regular government benefits and social services would be totally overburdened. Another study finds that income among the needy rose in April 2020 despite high unemployment. Leaders of these studies include Bruce Meyer (Harris Public Policy, 1307 E. 60th St., Chicago, IL 60637; www.ucchicago.edu/brucemeyer) and Zachary Parolin (Center on Poverty and Social Policy, 1255 Amsterdam Ave., New York, NY 10027; www.columbia.edu).

Diane Pagen (www.dianepagan.com) superbly reports on and promotes the latest policy ideas for making a decent family life possible in our economy. She is a leader of Income Movement (www.incomemovement.com), which lobbies for UBI.

There is a stubborn strain of resentment in our culture. Among its expressions is the distinction between the *deserving poor* and the *undeserving poor*. Traditional Catholicism uses the word *caritas* for charity and helps the poor without judgment, without distinction. Catholicism does not thereby romanticize the poor. Because of sin, some people (rich or poor) *game the system*. The Covid-19 relief money, it turns out, was often used for rent. It kept many artists, gig workers, health care aides, waitresses and students in their apartments.

Ward concludes her essay on UBI by reiterating sound Catholicism: “We can’t reject proposals on the basis that they might help the undeserving... We are all undeserving, yet God offers us help. How can we fail to extend the same grace to everybody else?”

On Easter 2020 Pope Francis said that because of Covid-19 “this may be the time to consider a universal basic wage.” Such a policy would assist those who “almost never receive the recognition that you deserve, because you are truly invisible to the system. Market solutions do not reach the peripheries, and state protection is hardly visible there.”

Francis, though not necessarily endorsing UBI over a guaranteed minimum wage or other similar policies, wants something that

covers more than the familiar wage-earners. He mentions “street vendors, gatherers, those who work at carnival times, small farmers, construction workers, dressmakers, the different varieties of caregivers, [plus all] who are not part of the regular workforce, working on your own or in the grassroots economy, you who have no steady income to get you through this hard time.” He wants Catholics and other like-minded people “to combat the invisibility of these *social poets*, by directing to them the same attentive gaze Christ directed to the widow who discreetly made her offering to the temple treasury.” (For more on Francis and UBI see a report by Fr. Gaël Giraud, SJ in *La Civiltà Cattolica* (www.laciviltacattolica.com; 6/22/20.)

North American Spirituality

Maria Moreno (1920-1989)
& *Larry Itliong* (1913-1977)

In 1958, a flood in Tulare County, California, left more than 300 farm workers displaced and unemployed. County regulations excluded farm workers from food assistance eligibility. Moreno and her 12 children were among those going hungry. Her decision to speak out and tell her story convinced the county to reverse policy and offer food assistance. From that point on, with only two years of formal education, Moreno became an effective early voice for migrant workers’ rights, helping to set the groundwork for advancement in the decades ahead under the leadership of Cesar Chavez (1927-1993), Dolores Huerta and others.

Chavez and Huerta founded National Farm Workers Association in September 1962, later renamed United Farm Workers Union (www.ufw.org). But before then Moreno was hired as the first female farm worker organizer when the AFL-CIO launched the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC) in 1959. A charismatic speaker, she pressed for improved working conditions for migrants. She met one-to-one with landowners, college students and politicians. When in 1961, the AFL-CIO stopped funding AWOC, the small union elected Moreno to plead their case. Her speech at the AFL-CIO convention restored funding for a time.

Moreno’s life is a story of how a single voice, when joined with others in community action, can inspire and effect change.

In the final two decades of her life, Moreno left organizing to be a Pentecostal

minister on the California-Arizona border where she set up a mission for the poor. (*St. Anthony Messenger* [9/19], 28 W, Liberty St., Cincinnati, OH 45202)

Most grammar school and high school students encounter farm worker organizing in one or another textbook. The assumption is that these farm workers are Mexican-American. So in September 1965 who were the farm workers who went on strike and whose action launched a boycott that brought Chavez to national attention? The workers were Filipino-Americans.

Larry Itliong (1913-1977), a Filipino-American, walked his first picket line in 1930, and even he did not invent farm worker organizing. The United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Allied Workers, affiliated with the CIO, was already active in Washington State, Alaska and California. Itliong was involved with UCAPAW and in the late 1940s he led strikes among asparagus pickers. In 1959 an Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee was formed in the merged AFL-CIO. In the summer of 1965 Itliong led a successful AWOC strike in the Coachella Valley.

On September 8, 1965 Itliong gathered hundreds of workers into Filipino Community Hall in Delano, CA for a vote to strike the area’s grape growers. It was a bold move and Itliong realized he needed help. As is common with ethnic groups, Filipino-Americans and Mexican-Americans did not easily mingle. Yet Itliong approached Chavez to join in the strike. Until then, Chavez was spending his time building the base and lobbying; he had yet to launch any job action; only 200 workers were paying dues to his NFWA. But Chavez realized his opportunity and thus began the now famous Delano Grape Strike and National Boycott. Four flags were prominent in the first demonstration: the U.S. flag of course plus the flags of the Philippines and Mexico and the flag/banner of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Itliong served as an assistant to the new United Farm Workers Union, including as director of national boycotts.

Over time, “loyalty to Chavez” often superseded the development of leaders and the external mission of the UFW, as Mirian Pawel details in her sympathetic biography *The Crusades of Cesar Chavez* (Bloomsbury, 2014; \$21.60). Chavez’ decisions were arbitrary and he imported some cult-like techniques from Synanon. Itliong spoke against authoritarianism. Chavez replied to him: The problem is “you won’t obey my orders.” Thus in October 1971

Itliong resigned from UFW. (*Dollars & Sense* [6/18], 89 South St. #LL02, Boston, MA 02111)

Itliong and Filipinos are left out of most textbooks. His place may soon be restored thanks to family efforts and a movie, *The Delano Manongs* (Media Factory [2014]; www.delanomanongs.com). Moreno is likewise forgotten. *Adios Amor: the Search for Maria* is a recent documentary. It was shown on *Voces*, a PBS series. However, PBS does not have rights to it and it is not yet in other ways available.

News and Views

Stop it.

Wall St. Journal (7/12/20) says that Archbishop Justin Welby was “a treasurer in the 1980s oil industry, including for Enterprise Oil,” now part of Royal Dutch Shell. But then “Welby found a higher calling in religion.”

The Evangelist of Albany (5/28/20) has a three-page feature on priests celebrating 70, 50, 40, 30, 20 and 10 year ordination anniversaries. Its front page promo for the feature is “A Higher Calling.”

The ordained priesthood is a noble calling; it is not higher. The call to holiness applies universally. To be an exemplary parent these days is challenging. So too, to be a fully responsible business executive, a dedicated police officer, a conscientious official in the State Department, a retail clerk or a finance advisor.

Seminarians are older than in the past. They held jobs in engineering, social work, teaching and marketing before they applied to a seminary. Dear fellow editors: We are 65 years past Vatican II. Don't write that these seminarians or newly ordained left a career to pursue a higher calling.

Rest in Peace

Sr. Carol Frances Jegen, BVM (1925-2020)

Jegen served as a teacher and administrator at Mundelein College from 1957-1991 and continued teaching until 1994 at Loyola University, Chicago, which absorbed Mundelein. In 1957 Jegen started Mundelein's theology department and in 1989 a concentration in peace studies. She was among the Mundelein leaders who created a graduate program in Religious Studies and its Hispanic Institute. She

served on numerous boards, including ten years as a trustee at Catholic Theological Union, and was active in several causes, including extensive involvement with farm workers.

Jegen wrote scholarly articles and authored books like *Jesus the Peacemaker* (Sheed & Ward [1986]), *Transformed by the Trinity* (Loyola Press [2008]; \$12.95) and as editor of *Mary According To Women* (Leven Press [1985]).

Your INITIATIVES' editor was Jegen's mediocre graduate student. One class was a close reading of the Vatican's 1971 *General Catechetical Directory* and also of *Evangelization in Latin America's Present and Future* (the famous Puebla Document) of 1979. With commentary the bishops' Puebla Document checked-in at 350 pages. Another class was heavy-duty (mostly Jesuit) theologians including Cardinal Avery Dulles, SJ (1918-2008), Fr. John Haughey, SJ (1930-2019) and particularly Fr. Karl Rahner, SJ (1904-1984).

Jegen holds a special place in National Center for the Laity memory. She was one of 43 signers of NCL's Advent 1977 charter, *A Chicago Declaration of Christian Concern*. She participated in NCL's founding convention in March 1979 at Notre Dame. In its first years she gave NCL access to an office and allowed INITIATIVES to use Mundelein's postal permit. She hosted a June 1982 NCL conference on St. John Paul II's encyclical, *On Human Work*.

NCL got off to a big start in the late 1970s but then, we admit, hibernated. One day in the early 1980s Jegen walked me into a classroom and said to the teacher: “This is someone who will interest you.” The teacher was Russ Barta (1918-1997), who in addition to his college job was the first president of NCL. That introduction led to NCL's revival: major conferences, retreats for workers, a truly national board, tax-exempt status, a support group for Chicago CEOs, regular advocacy, many publications, many roundtables for clarification of thought and 254 issues of INITIATIVES so far.

To honor Jegen's memory, NCL invites you to donate to Sisters of Charity BVM (1100 Carmel Dr., Dubuque, IA 52003).

Happenings

International Labor Rights Forum (1634 I St. NW #1000, Washington, DC 20006; www.ilrf.org) is INITIATIVES' go-to source for the latest on exploitation in apparel sweatshops in Pakistan, practices allowed by brand name retailers in the U.S. and elsewhere. ILRF is also on top of the slavery issue in Thailand's seafood industry. ILRF is merging with Global Labor Justice (1616 P St. NW #150, Washington, DC 20036; www.globallaborjustice.org). GLJ is expert at finding and communicating evils in Asia's fast fashion industry as well as on other topics. Jennifer Rosenbaum serves as director of GLJ-ILRF. As more details appear, INITIATIVES will suggest a donation to the new entity.

Looking for a fellowship in social change? Check out Pro Fellow (www.profellow.com). It currently lists 30 opportunities for justice advocacy through the law and other means. Areas of interest include the environment, economic equality, health care, civil rights and more. This cyber-resource was started and is maintained by young adults.

Union of Concerned Scientists (2 Brattle Sq., Cambridge MA 02138; www.ucsusa.org) has a Science for Public Good Fund. Members can apply for up to \$1,000 of financial support for "online advocacy, digital community building, or related online efforts to advance science-based policy." Examples for use of funds include online tools or audio/visual equipment, virtual gatherings, registration fees for training, support for promotion or honoraria for an online event.

INITIATIVES' friends at Casa Juan Diego (PO Box 70113, Houston, TX 77270; www.cjd.org) are coping with increased need during Covid-19. About 100 migrants and refugees stay overnight and during the day other families request food and other necessities. Casa Juan Diego is a Catholic Worker House.

Annunciation House (1003 E. San Antonio Ave., El Paso, TX 79901; www.annunciationhouse.org) is similarly overburdened in its response to refugees.

Both of these Catholic entities welcome donations.

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For a cyber-version of INITIATIVES, go to www.catholiclabor.org. On the site's heading go to "Library."

NCL, founded to continue discussion prompted by Vatican II (1962-1965) and by the Advent 1977 *Chicago Declaration of Christian Concern*, is an independent 501-C-3 Catholic organization with a State of Illinois charter.

NCL's board includes Charles DiSalvo, Ambrose Donnelly, Tom Donnelly, Bill Droel, Adam Fitzpatrick, John Hazard and Lauren Sukal.

"We must...believe in the dignity of all work. What makes a job menial? I'm tired of this stuff about menial labor. What makes it menial is that we don't pay folk anything. Give somebody a job and pay them some money so they can live and educate their children and buy a home and have the basic necessities of life. And no matter what the job is it takes on dignity... When I took off on that plane this morning I saw men go out there in their overalls. I saw them working on things... Some going out there to put the breakfast on [the plane] so that we could eat on our way... These people who constitute the ground crew are just as significant as the pilot because this plane couldn't move if you didn't have the ground crew. [In the hospitals] the woman or the man who goes in there to sweep the floor is just as significant as the doctor because if they don't get the dust off the floor germs will begin to circulate... There is dignity in all work when we learn to pay people decent wages." –Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (1929-1968), in a sermon at Ebenezer Baptist Church, 7/4/65.