

<h1 style="color: green;">Initiatives</h1> <p style="color: green;">In Support of Christians in the World</p>	<p>National Center for the Laity PO Box 291102 Chicago, IL 60629 www.catholiclabor.org http://twitter.com/InitiativesNcl</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">August 2021 Number 260</p>
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Theology of Work

As of September 12th, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński (1901-1981) of Poland is “Blessed Stefan,” a decisive step in official saint-making.

There were many popular books in pastoral theology in the years after World War II, books that anticipated and carried out Vatican II (1962-1965). Sheed & Ward, Image/Doubleday and others had success publishing Western European and U.S. writers. The majority of these solid books were addressed to those desiring a revitalized church. Wyszyński had a different outlook in his 1946 essay, *Duch Pracy Ludzkiej* (*The Spirit of Human Labor*). His strategy was to rebuild society based on an outward-looking, dynamic Catholic vision of work.

Marxists and others at the time regarded the 175-page *Duch Pracy Ludzkiej* as a shift in the traditional Catholic attitude, a turn away from work as a necessary evil to work in itself as part of spiritual life.

Wyszyński’s interest in work was longstanding, reports Stefan Gigacz. He was introduced to the Young Christian Workers movement “while studying in Rome in 1929-1930... When he returned to his home diocese of Włocławek in 1932 he founded the *Katolickie Stowarzyszenie Młodzieży Robotniczej*--the Young Catholic Workers Association. Because the movement had barely reached beyond Belgium and France by 1930 Wyszyński’s group in Poland was “one of the earliest in the world.” (*Cardijn Magazine* [5/28/21]; www.cardijnresearch.org)

Wyszyński’s *Duch Pracy Ludzkiej* was never popular in Western Europe or North America. Today there are English editions including *Work* (Scepter in Ireland, 1960) and under three titles from Sophia Institute, *All You Who Labor* (1995), *Working Your Way Into Heaven* (1998) and *Sanctify Your Daily Life* (2018; \$18.95).

Wyszyński is not the only Catholic to develop a theology of work but his context is distinct. No country suffered more during World War II than Poland. After the war its people desperately needed hope and a sustaining work

ethic for the necessary reconstruction. Marxists had an attractive ideology of work and they were prepared to galvanize Poland into action. Could Catholicism offer something other than a condemnation of godless communism; something powerful, positive and pastoral for workers as workers?

Wyszyński heaves aside the mistaken reading of *Genesis*. Work is not the result of Eve and Adam’s sin, he writes. “Even before the fall people had to work for they had to dress paradise. Work is therefore the duty of people from the first day of life. It is not the result of original sin; it is not a punishment for disobedience.” Instead, work is participation in God’s Creation and Redemption. In the first six chapters Wyszyński shows that work is the major axis of a spirituality in which the sacred and secular are united. He then reflects on specific virtues needed for competent work, including patience, constancy, silence and solidarity (*solidarność*). The final three chapters treat the relation between work and leisure, including Sabbath time.

St. John Paul II (1920-2005), also from Poland, drew upon Wyszyński to develop a theology of work. (Obtain *John Paul II’s Gospel of Work*, NCL, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$7 discount price.) Whereas John Paul II gives more attention to the social order of work and to defects in economic systems, Wyszyński attends to “the interior life of our work.”

Is anyone developing a Catholic theology of work suitable to the 21st century, to our global, technological economy? Please inform INITIATIVES. This is a sincere query.

Taking the Initiative

At a Green Hedge Fund

NCL admires those persistent *outsiders* who agitate companies to curtail their defiling of our environment. NCL is also intrigued by those who get *inside* those companies for the same purpose.

Engine No. 1 (710 Sansome St., San Francisco, CA 94111; www.engine1.com) is an investment fund dedicated to “long term value by

harnessing the power of capitalism.” It was founded in November 2020 by Chris Jones, who founded other funds, and by a handful of investment experts with experience at Jana, Black Rock and more.

Engine No. 1 recently backed four candidates with green sensibility for the Exxon Mobil board. Three were elected. Two of the winners have experience in the oil industry; the third comes by way of the computer industry with conservation credentials. Their winning campaign included ecology issues, but for wider appeal it hit on other topics. Engine No. 1 faulted Exxon for its years of unprofitable decisions, its opaque lobbying practices and its unwillingness to try new methods of energy delivery.

Engine No. 1 is too small by itself, holding less than 1% of Exxon stock, to win an oppositional campaign. It first had to build extra power by gaining the alliance of two state pension funds and three major brokerage houses. (*N.Y. Times*, 5/27, 6/2, 6/3/21)

Will Exxon now reduce its carbon footprint, however gradually? It is imperative for outsiders in the months ahead to monitor Engine No. 1 and the reform faction inside Exxon so that ideals don’t become a *green wash*; i.e. *virtue signaling* while business continues *as usual*.

Taking the Initiative *In the Classroom*

This fall Washington National Cathedral (3101 Wisconsin Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20016) dedicates a stone carving of Holocaust survivor and Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel (1928-2016). Wiesel is known worldwide for his human rights and peace activism, and as a chronicler of the Holocaust. But he often stated: “I am a teacher first.”

Ariel Burger, in *Witness: Lessons from Elie Wiesel’s Classroom* (Houghton, Mifflin [2018]; \$26.00), recounts what he learned from Wiesel as his student, teaching assistant and friend over decades. Declaring that “learning saved me,” Wiesel believed deeply in the power of education.

Of course, knowledge alone does not lead to compassionate, ethical behavior. Wiesel knew this from the example of highly cultured Nazi Germany. Thus, he saw *memory* as a key element to ensure that knowledge becomes a blessing and not a curse. “My goal is always the same,” he said. “To invoke the past as a shield for the future.” In his Nobel acceptance speech,

Wiesel stated, “If anything can, it is memory that will save humanity.” This assertion has particular resonance today as our country remembers its past through Juneteenth observances, the centenary of the Tulsa Race Massacre and other conversations about Native Americans, Blacks and immigrants.

As a rule of thumb, Wiesel told his students, “Remember, the learning must make you more, not less human.” As a professor, his method relied more on posing questions than on giving answers. For example, in teaching *Faust*, he urged students to seek the truth of historical and current situations and events, asking, “Where is *God* in all that?” “Where am *I* in all that?” “Where is *Mephistopheles*?”

Burger’s recollections show how much Wiesel loved and respected his students, how much he valued the give and take of their exchanges. “Your voice is as important as mine.” He wanted students never “to turn away from reality, to pretend that evil is not evil.” To forget is “to empower evil... Once you make [the] choice to create hope, then you can look at evil without flinching, without falling. And this is the first step to fighting it, to protesting it.” Thus Wiesel saw teaching as a form of activism.

Burger concludes that Wiesel, the teacher, helped his students to notice people at risk of invisibility, to think and feel deeply, to ask questions, to embrace mystery, to celebrate friendship, to remember and understand the link between the past and the future, and to speak up against injustice.

These values find resonance in *The Soul of Teaching* by John Horan (ACTA Publications [2020]; \$16.95). Horan is a founder and long-time teacher at North Lawndale College Prep (1615 S. Christiana Ave., Chicago, IL 60623). He offers stories, insights and prayers in support of those engaged in the vital vocation of educating young people. As with Wiesel, the teacher-student relationship is marked by empowering respect and affection. While not downplaying challenges and frustrations, Horan demonstrates in his vignettes and reflections that “the most fundamental element of great teaching is love.” He contends that “what separates an average school from a great school is the way each sees their kids.” Recognizing and nurturing the students’ potential, teachers can be “firefighters, architects of hope.”

Encouragement plays a big part, especially in the inner city where the children and their parents can be in “an affirmation desert.” Horan testifies to the growth that can

happen in the context of deep relationships between young people and caring adults. He shows that, though difficult, teaching is soulful and indispensable work. In the end, Horan affirms that “great schools are acts of love.”

Taking the Initiative

Among Rideshare Drivers

Drivers for ride-hailing companies like Uber and Lyft face several challenges. Some are common to cabdrivers, like odd hours or dealing with drunken customers. Other challenges are unique because rideshare drivers are considered independent contractors rather than employees. They maintain and insure the car (sometimes leasing an acceptable model) and they cover their own benefits. Further, the company app provided to the drivers significantly controls their opportunity for fares.

Being classified as an independent contractor also means drivers lack some wage and labor protections that most workers take for granted, like a minimum wage, sick leave, eligibility for unemployment insurance, overtime pay and compensation for work-related expenses.

Last November, following a lobby effort by ride-hailing companies and others, California voters passed Proposition 22. It solidifies the exemption of rideshare drivers from normal labor regulations. Proposition 22 overturns a prior state law that put gig workers in the employee category. Though it removed the protections mentioned above, Proposition 22 vested rideshare drivers with some rights, including a health insurance option for some, an anti-discrimination rule and mandatory safety training.

Drivers and their supporters in other states continue to push for legislative protections and here-and-there they attempt to negotiate wages and working conditions. For example, the Independent Drivers Guild (456 Johnson Ave. #420, Brooklyn, NY 11237; www.driversguild.org), an affiliate of the Machinists Union, represents 80,000 drivers in Metro NYC and also has chapters in Massachusetts and Illinois. It aims to “unite drivers in the fight for the right to collective bargaining.” The Guild takes credit for securing a minimum hourly wage and an appeal process for drivers when their access to a ride-hailing app has been cancelled.

But since success from legislation and collective bargaining has been limited, some NYC drivers have formed a ride-hailing company of their own. The Drivers Cooperative (93 Fourth Ave. #29, New York, NY 10003; www.drivers.coop), owned and run by drivers, raises wages by taking a commission from its members that is smaller than what the big-name companies collect. If members of the cooperative make more money for a period of time, pressure will build on the big companies to raise wages. To succeed, The Drivers Cooperative needs more customers to use its app and for the time being it needs donations. Rideshare drivers, by the way, can use the Cooperative’s app and also a big-name app.

Ride-hailing cooperatives have potential to do more, not only for workers, but for their communities. All ride-hailing companies use computer programs to help drivers and riders find each other. In the process, these companies collect valuable data on travel habits and traffic. Most rideshare drivers have no right to this information. Those who belong to a cooperative, however, can collectively decide what to do with it. The Driver’s Seat (www.driversseat.co), is a cooperative that allows members to collect and interpret data about their driving and their compensation. It proposes to crunch and sell data to municipalities for urban planning. Currently, its members are in Denver, Los Angeles and Portland.

Ride-hailing companies want drivers for long hours at unpredictable pay. They never ask drivers to participate in the fate of the company. With a cooperative, a driver not only works hard, but also takes responsibility for the coop’s long-term decisions. The payoff, if the coop is successful, is independence—not the independence of a contractor but rather that of a community. (*N.Y. Times*, 5/29/21 and *Dollars & Sense* [6/21], PO Box 209, Portsmouth, NH 03802)

Taking the Initiative

On Food Delivery

As Covid-19 recedes, the popularity of food delivery remains. By one estimate 65,000 workers in NYC carry orders from restaurants to customers. Many of them ride an electric scooter or electric bike. With some exceptions these workers are not employed by any restaurant and none are employees of the delivery app company.

Los Deliveristas Unidos is an advocacy effort by Worker's Justice Project (365 Broadway, Brooklyn, NY 11211; www.workersjustice.org). With rallies and processions, including one by 2,000 drivers in April, and with flyers, it draws attention to the drivers' working conditions: Their bikes are stolen; their routes are unpredictable; their tips are low; some restaurants don't allow them to use restrooms, especially so during Covid-19's worst months.

WJP also lobbies for legislation, as does 32BJ SEIU (25 W. 18th St., New York, NY 10011; www.seiu32bj.org). City Council members Carlos Menchaca (4417 Fourth Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11220) and Justin Brannan (8203 Third Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11209) have bills pending to rectify the restroom situation and to "set limitations on distance and routes for deliveries." Currently, the app company can send a driver far and wide for only a \$5 order. If she or he refuses, the app company can penalize the driver.

John Sewell (D.P. Dough, 519 E. Washington St., Iowa City, IA 52240) is a franchise owner of a calzone shop. The chain has 27 locations near universities. Last February Sewell, along with other small restaurants, decided to compete against the big food-delivery apps. Their company, LoCo (www.loco.coop) is cooperatively owned by the participating restaurant owners. LoCo keeps only a small part of the transaction "so that our restaurants can profit." It claims that its drivers get "superior communication and support."

Remarkably, LoCo has already spread to Knoxville, Nashville, Las Vegas, Tampa Bay and Richmond. Because each LoCo operation keeps money circulating locally, municipal agencies have inquired about signing-up for delivered meals to pantries and other service agencies.

To succeed LoCo needs more customers to download and use its app. (*Brooklyn Tablet*, 6/5/21 and *N.Y. Times*, 5/29/21 and *Bryan High Orator* [6/25/21], 4700 Giles Rd., Omaha, NE 68157 and *Labor Notes* [6/21], 7435 Michigan Ave., Detroit, MI 48210)

Taking the Initiative On Wages

A "just remuneration for work [is the most] important way for securing a just relationship between an employee and the

employer," says St. John Paul II (1920-2005). The same applies to the economy. "In every case a just wage is the concrete means of verifying the justice of the whole socioeconomic system," John Paul II continues. If wages are right, the entire business and the entire system are likely right. (Order *John Paul II's Gospel of Work*, NCL, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$7.)

Jobs in restaurants, retail stores and in parts of the tourist sector are among the lowest paying. Back in 2012, 200 New York City fast food workers walked off the job, chanting *Fight for \$15* (www.fightfor15.org). Oh that's extravagant, many thought. But attitudes and policies have changed since then. Amazon, Walmart, Costco, McDonald's and more are raising wages to \$15 and above.

Companies by nature do everything for mixed motives. Retail home delivery is popular during Covid-19 and continues as the plague gradually recedes. Restaurants and now tourism also have more business. However, those sectors have a shortage of workers. Those businesses want lower turnover rates and no protest outside the store. Consequently, better wages and in some cases a signing bonus. (*Chicago Tribune*, 5/15/21)

Tompkins County Workers' Center (115 E. Martin Luther King St., Ithaca, NY 14850; www.tcworkerscenter.org) has a unique strategy for improving wages. It asks Alternatives Federal Credit Union (www.alternatives.org) to calculate a living wage for their Finger Lakes' county. Alternatives Federal convenes an expert panel every two years. Just prior to Covid-19 the minimum was \$15.37 for a single person; more for a family. The Workers' Center then persuades area businesses to become certified Living Wage Employers. So far over 100 display the seal of approval—a few construction firms, several shops, municipal entities, a couple of churches and some social service agencies, including Catholic Charities.

In the next phase the Workers' Center needs to leverage its relationships and get big employers on board: Cornell University, Borg-Warner, Ithaca College, Wegman's Grocery and Cayuga Medical Center.

The latest Living Wage Employer is Ithaca Marriott (120 S. Aurora St., Ithaca, NY 14850; www.marriott.com). It joins two other hotels: Argos Inn (www.argosinn.com), a historic downtown mansion, and the charming Grayhaven Motel (www.grayhavenmotel.com).

By the way, INITIATIVES' readers ought to check with Fair Hotel Movement (275 Seventh Ave. #1600, New York, NY 10001; www.fairhotel.org) before vacationing in the Finger Lakes or anywhere else. A few Marriott hotels, though not the one in Ithaca, are on the boycott list.

Sadly, wage theft increased during Covid-19, finds Center for Innovation in Worker Organization (Rutgers University, 94 Rockafeller Rd., Piscataway, NJ 08854; <https://smlr.rutgers.edu>). On average, an unscrupulous employer shortchanges an employee 20% of wages.

A house painter hears excuses about pending pay for several weeks only to realize that the boss has no intention. A family promises a domestic a certain amount but two weeks later changes the agreement. Restaurant servers can be paid a sub-minimum wage with the expectation of tips. During slow times, like Covid-19, the employer is obligated to make up the difference and at no time is the employer allowed to dip into the tip jar (be it glass or electronic). Sub-contractors might give workers falsified and confusing pay stubs or slight them, using cash payments.

Here in Chicago about 60 employees of a Vietnamese restaurant on the north side were awarded a settlement. Their employer was falsifying pay stubs and keeping tips. Some months earlier 58 employees of a south side restaurant likewise received a settlement. The workers endured months upon months of lackluster investigation and bureaucratic stalling. Documents bounced around several agencies. This summer three workers from a car wash received about \$100,000 each in a settlement. It took them nearly 10 years. The US Labor Department, the Illinois Department of Labor, the Illinois attorney general and a judge had to intervene. The three were assisted by a worker center, Arise (1436 W. Randolph #202, Chicago, IL 60607; www.arisechicago.org). (*N.Y. Times*, 9/4/20 & *Chicago Tribune*, 5/7/21 & *Chicago Sun Times*, 6/2/21)

Other worker centers that agitate against wage theft include Centro de Trabajadores Unidos (3715 Chicago Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55407; www.ctul.net), and Catholic Labor Network (www.catholiclabor.org) in the DC area. For more on this topic, get *Wage Theft in America* by Kim Bobo (NCL, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL; \$7).

See, the wages you withheld from the workers who harvested your fields are crying

aloud, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. (*James 5:4*)

130 Years *Of Catholic Social Thought*

During this fiscal year, those U.S. households with children receive a minimum \$250 monthly check from our federal government. The family's political affiliation is irrelevant and its income is not an issue if it is below \$150,000 for a married couple; \$75,000 for a single parent. Eligible families retain their other federal benefits. Parents can spend the money anyway they choose.

This experiment in U.S. social policy is called Child Tax Credit. It plays off of the Earned Income Tax Credit enacted in 1975. (*N.Y. Times*, 5/16 & 6/26/21 and *Chicago Sun Times*, 6/22/21 and *The Atlantic* [6/21], 60 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10010)

The U.S. policy is similar to Family Allowance Program found in many countries. Family allowance is an acknowledgment that children are a major social resource and that all of society is obliged to raise them. The monthly checks come to all families, no questions imposed. Finland had this benefit for government employees in the 1920s and made it universal in 1948. France started it in the 1930s. In 1945 Canada became the 34th country with family allowance. In various forms it exists in Italy, Belgium, Ireland, Poland, Hungary, New Zealand, Spain and the United Kingdom among others. In many cases these family allowance plans were instituted as part of a recovery package after each of the two world wars.

Catholic social thought endorses these plans and Catholic groups lobbied for them. The social obligation to a just income, says St. John Paul II (1920-2005), is best achieved through a family wage, but wages can be supplemented "through other social measures such as family allowances." (*John Paul II's Gospel of Work*, NCL, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$7 special price)

Drawing on 2,000+ years of experience, Catholicism does not romanticize the poor nor endow the rich with special virtue. It simply says "help one another," making no distinction between the so-called *deserving poor* and *undeserving poor*.

Unfortunately, many people in our society, including some Catholics, use the

distinction to oppose government assistance. They moralistically say that individual dependency on welfare is a moral failure. When even today they decry welfare dependency, they have AFDC in mind. This policy began in 1935. President Bill Clinton ended it in 1996. Because the fiscal 2021-2022 Child Tax Credit experiment applies to most working families, there is no stigma of dependency.

Many people, left, right and center, talk about strengthening family life and respecting hard work. In INITIATIVES' opinion the Child Tax Credit is a needed investment in both.

Rest in Peace

Bob Abernathy (1927-2021)

For 40 years Abernathy was a foreign correspondent, Los Angeles anchor and Washington reporter for NBC, covering everything from the first days of the space program to glasnost in the Soviet Union, to interviewing several U.S. presidents and numerous world leaders. He was 69-years old--an age when most people of his accomplishments could rightly rest on their laurels--when he approached Public Broadcasting System with his idea for a program that became *Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly*. He anchored and reported for that show for the next 20 years, retiring when he was 89.

Religion & Ethics covered a wide range of stories and featured most of our major religious voices including Dalai Lama, Most Rev. Desmond Tutu, President Jimmy Carter and Rev. Billy Graham (1918-2018). The show was interesting because it did not exclusively feature clergy. Abernathy assigned his correspondents to profile poets, political figures, actors, artists, writers and musicians, getting them to open up about how their faith intersected with the rest of their lives. A memorable segment profiled Broadway great Jerry Herman (1931-2019), who wrote the music and lyrics to *Hello Dolly*, *Mame*, *Sweeney Todd* and *La Cage aux Folles*.

Abernathy, a grandson of a well-known Washington, DC Baptist pastor, grew interested in religion from listening to his grandfather preach to a congregation that at one time included President Warren Harding (1865-1923) and Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes (1862-1948).

Abernathy took a sabbatical from NBC in 1984 to complete a theology degree at Yale

Divinity School. Few journalists at that time took an interest in religious news. It was often relegated to a single reporter whose main duty was to compile a list of local worship services for the Saturday paper. That would all change with the increasing influence of conservative Christians in local and national politics. Abernathy recognized that trend early on. He believed that religion is an integral part of so many lives that it deserved the same attention and penetrating reporting as politics, economics or social issues.

In recent years, journalism has taken unfair hits from some politicians whose main goal is to twist the truth to their purposes. Abernathy was the best his profession has to offer. He was a person who sought the truth, and told it--a great reporter, editor, supervisor and friend all rolled into one.

Rest in Peace

William Toomey (1931-2020)

With wife Joanne, Toomey raised nine children. By NCL criteria that's automatic sainthood. Toomey participated in NCL's March 1979 founding convention at University of Notre Dame. NCL knew Toomey through his presidency of U.S. Catholic Social Action Conference. His daughter, Mary Beth Toomey Dunne (1953-2010) accompanied him to the convention. Mary Beth was subsequently elected to NCL's board where she served for many years.

A graduate of Albany Law School, Toomey served as a district director of Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor Relations (216 Ives Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853; www.ilr.cornell.edu). Eventually he opened his own law office in the Capitol District and established Mabin Realty in 1958. Both businesses were active until his death.

Toomey was involved in civic affairs, including through the German American Club and the National Council for Small Business Management. He was chair of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs in the Diocese of Albany, particularly involved with Catholic-Jewish relations.

The Toomey family requests memorial donations to Christian Brothers Academy (12 Airline Dr., Albany, NY 12205; www.cbaalbany.org). Toomey graduated from CBA in 1949 and was an active alumnus. The

school commissioned a print by Bro. Mickey McGrath, OSFS for its library to honor Toomey.

Rest in Peace

Mary Lou Wolff (1927-2021)

As a teenager, Wolff was active in Young Christian Students, a specialized Catholic Action (capital *A*) program of faith formation within schools and workplace settings. Its emphasis was improvement of weekday situations, not involvement in the parish.

Wolff tried college for one year and then worked in a couple factories and as a waitress, while joining another Catholic Action organization, Young Christian Workers. She was the editor of YCW's *Impact* magazine and for a time was national director of YCW publications. Because of budget constraints YCW cut stipends and eliminated *Impact*. An aside: Wolff's subscription list and remaining resources were then given to Catholic Labor Alliance, the predecessor of our NCL.

Wolff married and became the mother of nine; something NCL considers grounds for automatic canonization. In her spare time (smile) she joined a parish discussion group. Catholic Action had an adage: "A study circle without

works is a dead study circle." Thus soon enough Wolff and her discussion club friends had a campaign to remove dead trees in the neighborhood. A similar effort to install stop signs on a busy street followed.

With her background in Catholic Action and her credibility, Wolff was equipped for her next involvement. In the early 1970s the Industrial Areas Foundation (89-60 164th St., Jamaica, NY 11432; www.metro-iaf.org), then headquartered in Chicago, launched a county-wide Campaign Against Pollution to pressure utility companies on air quality. No surprise to readers of Chicago newspapers, some aldermen and the city tax assessor were dealing under the table with utilities.

The Crosstown Expressway "will be the most modern and beautiful...in the nation," said Mayor Richard Daley (1902-1976) in 1972. It was supposed to start at the Kennedy and going south alongside Cicero Ave., it would veer southeast near Midway Airport and connect to the Dan Ryan. Daley, however, underrated CAP's opposition. Wolff and her friends did not favor the destruction of hundreds of homes, many small businesses and church buildings. Today there is no Crosstown. Instead, the drive means enduring the traffic-jammed Loop route.

INITIATIVES

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NCL is an independent 501-C-3 Catholic organization with an Illinois charter.

Please consider a donation to NCL. See page eight.

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

"When 23-year old Amanda Gorman...proclaimed her remarkable *The Hill We Climb* (Viking; \$15.99, www.theamandagorman.com) at the inauguration of Joseph Biden, the second Catholic president in American history, commentators took note of her Harvard education, her perfect diction, her exquisite beauty, her poise and her radiant yellow Prada coat. But very few took note that she was a member of St. Brigid Catholic Church [5214 S. Western Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90062]. Few took note that she was an African-American Catholic woman giving voice to the Black church when she proclaimed:

'Scripture calls us to envision that everyone shall sit under their own vine and fig tree and no one shall make them afraid. If we're to live up to our own time, then victory won't lie in the blade. But in all the bridges we've made, that is the promise to glade, the hill we climb if only we dare.'"

--Most Rev. Edward Braxton in *Origins* (3211 Fourth St. NE, Washington, DC 20017; 4/22/21)