

<h1>Initiatives</h1> <p>In Support of Christians in the World</p>	<p>National Center for the Laity PO Box 291102 Chicago, IL 60629 www.catholiclabor.org</p>	<p>August 2022</p> <p>Number 267</p>
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Growth or Decline

“The church has to totally collapse,” say some disgruntled friends of INITIATIVES. These Catholics can easily name one or another bishop’s cluelessness or can mention the latest example of our bishops’ cover up of deviant personnel.

Similarly, INITIATIVES encounters disgruntled friends who nostalgically want to make Catholicism great again. Their rollback fixates on moving the tabernacle directly behind the altar or lobbying for more Latin in the liturgy. Plus they are quick to call out an inadequate priest or Catholic politician.

France lost 210,000 soldiers in World War II plus 390,000 civilians. Buildings and infrastructure were destroyed. Many church leaders were Vichy collaborators with the Nazis. After the war Cardinal Emmanuel Suhard (1874-1949) proposed a direction for the church in a 120-page reflection, *Growth or Decline?* (Fides, 1948).

It is impossible to simply put the past behind, Suhard writes. Our hope is in recognizing “an imminent new birth.” The church of the past is dissolving “through a thousand crevices.” It is irrelevant to many young adults who say Christianity is escapism. The church, as many experience it, “hovers over humanity instead of being incarnate.”

The way ahead is not an “exaggerated progressivism” that in desiring “the development of [the church’s] terrestrial forms forgets her eternal essence.” The way is not “exaggerated conservatism” that “defends the transcendence and perennial duration of the church but does not accept her contingency and her temporal growth.”

The church must adapt, but not embrace every new trend, Suhard says. Doctrine remains, but yesterday’s forms are not necessarily the ideal for the present. Yes, there is evil in the world but Christians need not flee or destroy the world. “The greatest error” for today’s Christians, he concludes, “is to allow the world to take shape without them.

Suhard gives a few examples of the church in dialogue with the world, including the

worker-priest movement and specialized Catholic Action groups,

There is yet no fresh burst of Christianity in France. Is that because Suhard’s prescription is faulty? Or is it because too few Christians bothered to engage the modern world?

Our NCL, for better or worse, is sticking to our 43-year old premise that the church is the people of God in dialogue with the world.

NCL stays clear of internal Church issues, important though they may be. NCL is focused on people at work—on the job, around the neighborhood and in the family.

NCL believes in episcopacy. However, NCL does not call for “the bishops to condemn Vladimir Putin,” for “the bishops to do something about pollution,” for “the bishops to censure Democratic officeholders.” Why the bishops? Isn’t it the responsibility of all the baptized to incrementally improve relationships, policies and institutions inside whatever situation they find themselves? “Take the initiative” is NCL’s slogan.

Taking the Initiative

In Business

A business might succeed on the personality and prior experience of its owner. A business could possibly succeed if it adhered to a tightly-written employee handbook or union contract. A business might have a shining mission statement—presuming it is sincere. (INITIATIVES has a copy of Enron’s laughable mission statement.)

The best ingredient, however, is a corporate culture; a culture crafted from patient reflection and one openly communicated to employees, suppliers, customers and the wider public.

The culture of Zingerman’s Deli (422 Detroit St., Ann Arbor, MI 48104; www.zingermanscommunity.com), celebrating its 40th anniversary, is conveyed in the slogan *great food, great service, great finances*. In addition to the deli the enterprise is now nine other businesses, including Roadhouse

Restaurant, Zingerman's Bakery, Camp Bacon, and Zingerman's Press. The mail/internet ordering division brings in the most money. Founders Paul Saginaw and Ari Weinzwieg own a portion of each business; 23 owner-partners share other portions.

The Zingerman's culture is detailed in *Satisfaction Guaranteed* by Micheline Maynard (Scribner [2022]; \$27.99). The entire operation—from selecting suppliers, to continual training of employees, to the display of financial reports and to the evaluation of sales and performance—is a highly reflective process. Zingerman's believes that clear definition and communication of purpose is essential, Maynard writes.

Saginaw and Weinzwieg draw on their University of Michigan education and their prior experience at a local restaurant and a fish market. They studied the management concepts of W. Edwards Deming (1900-1993) and particularly Toyota's commitment to continuous improvement. They are also influenced by the servant leadership model of Robert Greenleaf (1904-1990). They are guided by the adage "go and see" someone else's business, someone else's recipes, ingredients, suppliers and more. Don't destroy the competition; share ideas and resources. Although unilateral decisions feel efficient to some executives, Zingerman's fosters a participatory workplace with honest discussion. Direct employee communication and personal attention to customers is by design. Maynard finds consistent "cheerfulness and helpfulness" in all parts of the company.

From the beginning, Zingerman's considered the community as essential to its operation. It advocates for an increase in state and federal minimum wage. There is a team that gathers excess food from restaurants for the needy.

The Zingerman's culture, in Maynard's description, is generous and joyful. Not to say that the 1937 hit song *Whistle While You Work* is on continuous play loop. Further, it is a mistake for someone to assume that simply copying Zingerman's equals business success.

Taking the Initiative *At the Coffee Shop*

A corporate culture is authentic and worthwhile if employees regularly contribute to it—continually crafting it and promulgating it.

In March 2022 Howard Schultz signed on for his third turn as CEO of Starbucks (2401 Utah Ave. #SCR1, Seattle, WA 98134). Schultz is upset that employees at several outlets are considering a union, most of them with Starbucks Workers (2495 Main St. #556, Buffalo, NY 14214; www.sbworkersunited.com).

In a discursive interview with *N.Y. Times* (6/13/22) Schultz asserts that economic mobility is not available to many hourly workers and yet says that his employees don't need a union. Schultz' thinking is paternalistic. He doesn't grasp the irony in saying, "Building a great enduring company is about one thing—the currency of trust." Yes, trust is crucial. Its lack is a main reason why his employees are voting for a union; they don't trust their managers. They sense dissonance between Starbucks stated values and their workaday experience.

Schultz (whose net worth is about \$4.5billion) is so sure that his employees don't need a union that Starbucks has retained a union-busting firm, Littler Mendelson (50 W. San Fernando St. #700, San Jose, CA 95113). In doing so, Starbucks management has already lost the game, no matter if Littler Mendelson crushes every union effort. The currency of trust is squandered.

Starbucks claims to be socially conscious, but its culture was created "from the top down," writes former employee Molly Osberg. Schultz and his executives allot wages and benefits as if they are gifts. For those Starbucks employees seeking collective bargaining, the company's "aggressive, self-congratulatory, liberal rhetoric" feels "farical." The workers want meaningful participation in how they and their customers are treated. (*The Baffler* [6/22], 19 W. 21st St. #1010, New York, NY 10010)

Other libertarian entrepreneurs from the West Coast and elsewhere believe in a top-down, progressive enterprise. It reminds INITIATIVES of the warning from Pope Pius XI (1857-1939): Benevolence "will never be true unless it takes justice into constant account... The wage earner is not to receive in alms what is due in justice."

Catholic doctrine on labor relations can be widely useful. Any executive is welcome to learn its principles from a booklet, *Catholic Administrators and Labor Unions* (NCL, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; free).

Taking the Initiative *Against Wage Theft*

It is a sin to somehow steal a few dollars from Jeff Bezos (whose net worth after his divorce settlement exceeds \$168billion)...but a sin that warrants a tiny penance. To steal wages from a hard-working family is mean and seriously sinful.

Each of three employees from a car wash in Chicago's Little Village neighborhood recently got a check for \$108,282. They had been shortchanged. It took nine years to win this recovery. They pursued their case with the U.S. Dept. of Labor, the Illinois Dept. of Labor, the Illinois Attorney General and a district court.

At the beginning of Covid-19, several workers in the Chicago area signed-on to make masks in their homes. Their employer was Ultio Crati, a firm that assists small businesses secure government contracts.

At first the workers got checks, though irregularly. But then the checks stopped and by September 2020 the workers turned off their sewing machines. They are now seeking stolen wages through U.S. District court. Ultio says one of their clients is the real culprit.

Arise (1700 W. Hubbard St. #2E, Chicago, IL 60622; www.arisechicago.org), a worker center, assisted the car wash workers and, along with Raise the Floor (1 N. LaSalle St. #1275L, Chicago, IL 60602; www.raisetheflooralliance.org), is doing the same for the anti-Covid workers. (*Chicago Sun Times*, 6/2/21 & 6/8/22 and *Chicago Tribune*, 6/8/22)

Zygi Wilf is a real estate developer who also owns the Minnesota Vikings. The Vikings' office is within one of Wilf's parcels in Eagan, MN. The Wilf family is constructing "luxury standard" apartments (initially 261 units) in that same parcel.

Workers on the apartment project, aided by Centro de Trabajadores Unidos en Lucha (3715 Chicago Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55407; www.ctul.net), have a complaint pending with the Minnesota Dept. of Labor, claiming that pay was less than promised, that required overtime pay wasn't given and that health insurance wasn't included. North Central Council of Carpenters (730 Olive St., St. Paul, MN 55130) warned Wilf Co. about the project's unscrupulous subcontractors.

Blaze Pizza is a chain headquartered in California. Many of its outlets are independently

owned. Blaze Pizza (1000 SE Washington Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55414) has a new owner. Early this year the Minneapolis Department of Civil Rights determined that the former owner, Bartmann Group, used a wage scale below the legal minimum and denied sick days for those afflicted with Covid-19. The workers, aided by Restaurant Opportunities Center (1624 Harmon Pl. #224, Minneapolis, MN 55403; www.rocunited.org) were awarded about \$28,000 each.

These examples indicate three difficulties in preventing wage theft. Dishonesty is impugned after-the-fact. The legal process is slow-going. Many companies use a contractor who in turn uses subcontractors. Each can pass responsibility for theft along to another.

The Ramsey County Attorney (121 Seventh Pl., St. Paul, MN 55101), like its counterparts, has been ill-equipped to handle wage theft complaints. However, it convened leaders around the topic and released a report that estimated \$3million annually is stolen from construction workers in the St. Paul area. The attorney's office subsequently hired a full-time investigator. (*Union Advocate* [5/22 & 7/22], 353 W. Seventh St. #201, St. Paul, MN 55102 and *Workday Minnesota* [3/31/22]; www.workdayminnesota.org)

The U.S. Dept. of Justice (950 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20530; www.justice.gov) is now using antitrust law to get ahead of some of the dishonesty. Competitors in home health services and other industries, the department suspects, tacitly agree to hold down wages. Or a franchise requires its local operators to use a non-competitive employment policy. The franchise then has a mutual understanding with its competitors. A worker is unable to leave a business for higher pay at a similar business. (*N.Y. Times*, 4/16/22)

INITIATIVES welcomes reports from parish committees and others on the wage theft topic. Get *Wage Theft in America* by Kim Bobo (NCL, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$6.50 in limited supply).

Taking the Initiative *In Criminal Justice*

The U.S. abolition movement of the 18th and 19th centuries used a blend of religious, social and political institutions to move the elimination of slavery from a practical impossibility to a pressing moral necessity.

Break Every Yoke: Religion, Justice, and the Abolition of Prisons by Joshua Dubler and Vincent Lloyd (Oxford Press [2020]; \$27.19) calls for a revival of that abolition spirit. Specifically, the authors assert that the religious community, in concert with secular efforts, can and should play an important role in dismantling the current prison system.

Dubler and Lloyd contend that the “social catastrophe that is our criminal punishment system is a political problem, an economic problem and a problem of racial injustice.” They consider “the locking of human beings in cages” to be a moral abomination on a par with enslavement. Their goal is not just prison reform, but prison abolition.

The U.S. has an incarceration rate more than four times as high as the next highest nation in its peer group. There has been an exponential growth of the prison population in the past several decades. Dubler and Lloyd note that this escalation coincides with a shift in religious and political discourse about justice. As liberal Protestantism declines, especially since the 1960s, and Evangelicalism and secularism surge, religion turns inward, more private and personal, and less public, collective and socially minded. The sense of justice as a divine ideal gives way to a notion of justice as a personal and perhaps optional moral decision within the law. Morality is simply equated with law-keeping. When the understanding of justice is synonymous and supportive of the criminal justice system, the authors argue, it loses the possibility of critiquing the system. They want the religious community to recapture a prophetic, higher vision of justice that could imagine and work toward an alternative future, with an aim to “radically reshape the world in the image of true, divine justice.”

Andrew Skotnicki makes the same argument in *Conversion and Rehabilitation of the Penal System* (Oxford Press [2019]; \$26.95). Wrongdoers should be confined to “penal solitude” where they confront the “longing to overcome loneliness, fear and hostility,” he writes.

In calling for change, these books are more exhortatory than prescriptive. However, they offer several specific examples of a restorative, rather than retributive approach to justice that can serve as models for a positive direction ahead. Both books suggest that progressive religious ideas and institutions have the power to help clarify what real justice looks like.

NCL board member Tom Donnelly is a leader in Catholic Criminal Justice Reform (1220 E. 58th St., Chicago, IL 60637; www.lumenchristi.org). Its goal is not necessarily to abolish prisons, but to advocate for a variety of reforms in the U.S. criminal justice system.

Taking the Initiative *With Cement*

Cement is the glue for concrete. Cement-making is a big time carbon emitter. In a Catch-22 the transition to green energy, green buildings and green transportation requires lots of concrete.

One way to make cement with less pollution is to capture the carbon during the process. For now carbon capture is expensive and inconvenient. Another way is to make cement with less calcium, the main polluting element. Portland Cement Association (5420 Old Orchard Rd., Skokie, IL 60077; www.cement.org) has information on this and other strategies.

Though the environmental danger is urgent, “no one in the cement industry has seriously engaged” an alternative chemistry, writes Mike Disabato. Further, of those who invest in a green transition (government and private funders) not many “want to fret over cement.” (*The Outline* [6/28/18]; www.theoutline.com)

There’s one more strategy: develop non-polluting glue that is as strong, durable, affordable and accessible as cement.

Yuya Sakai and Kota Machida, Sakai’s student at Tokyo University, have a possible solution, one that at first seems wacky: food waste, of which Japan has about 5.7million tons per year. Using a multi-step process, these chemists make concrete that has a bending strength four times that of the cement type. They launched a company to advance their discovery, Fabula Inc. (Ariake Fronteer Bldg B9, Ariake 3 7 26, Koto-ku, Tokyo 135 0063 Japan; www.fabulajp.com). (*Chicago Tribune*, 6/3/22)

Experiments are under way with other cement substitutes—some old, some new. One source of information is Carbon Disclosure Project (60 Great Tower St. #400, London EC3R 5AZ England; www.cdp.net), particularly its *Building Pressure* reports.

Labor Apostles

In this and in subsequent issues of INITIATIVES, Kimball Baker will revisit his *Go to the Worker: America's Labor Apostles* (Marquette University Press, 2010), a history of the U.S. Catholic social action movement of the 1930s and 1940s. As in his earlier reflection for INITIATIVES on NCL founder Ed Marciniak (1918-2004), Baker highlights the theme of vocation.

Fr. John Hayes (1905-2002) of Chicago was ordained in 1930 and became a monsignor in 1953. Hayes brought great grace to his vocation of labor apostle. He came across as kind but determined, and those traits stand out in all three major phases of his ministry—as a key participant in the Chicago Archdiocese's strong social justice push in the 1930s, as a top aide at our bishops' National Catholic Social Action Department (CSAD) from 1940-44, and as a caring priest at Chicago's St. Carthage and Epiphany parishes after 1953. (Hayes was treated for tuberculosis and was ministering at University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio, 1944-1953.)

In the post-Depression years social justice was a priority for Cardinal George Mundelein (1872-1939) of Chicago. He famously declared, "Our place is beside the worker." Another social justice champion of that time and place was Msgr. Reynold Hillenbrand (1904-1979), ordained a year before Hayes. The two formed a group of young priests who profoundly implemented the see-judge-act principles and techniques of the Young Christian Workers movement. They were also influenced by personalist philosophy as practiced in the Catholic Worker movement of Dorothy Day (1897-1980) and Peter Maurin (1877-1949). And they consistently referenced *Reconstructing the Social Order*, an encyclical of Pope Pius XI (1857-1939), which reinforced the earlier injunction of Pope Leo XIII (1810-1903): "Go to the Worker."

Hayes and Hillenbrand visited Day at her New York City House of Hospitality in mid-1936, and she returned the visit, coming to Chicago's major seminary in 1938. Hayes became chaplain to the Catholic Workers in Chicago. Hayes, along with many other Chicago activists, often took part in Committee (later Congress) of Industrial Organization (CIO) drives at steel plants and stockyards. They picketed and passed out copies of the *Catholic*

Worker newspaper (36 E. First St., New York, NY 10003) and later did the same with Marciniak's influential *Chicago Catholic Worker*.

In the whirlwind of activism, Hayes was a pillar of quiet strength. His zeal came to the fore in organizing, in his hard-hitting articles for *Catholic Worker* newspapers, and especially in his teaching at a half-dozen Catholic labor schools. Several U.S. bishops took note of how Hillenbrand and Hayes were nurturing younger priests and thus arranged for Hayes to staff their CSAD in Washington, DC.

Chicago's social justice awakening had counterparts across the nation. After the onset of the Great Depression, for example, Catholics played a major role in national recovery. Fr. (later Msgr.) John A. Ryan (1869-1945), a well-respected economist at The Catholic University of America, worked with the bishops on recovery recommendations. When Franklin Roosevelt (1882-1949) was elected president in 1932, he consulted with Ryan and CSAD, incorporating some CSAD movement ideas into the National Labor Relations Act.

The big challenge was how to get Catholic social teaching down to street level. Catholic labor schools were one method. A 1939 CSAD survey identified 52 in 24 U.S. cities, including those associated with Hayes in Chicago. The courses differed at each school, but topics like parliamentary procedure, labor law and public speaking were common. The thrust of these schools was how Catholic social teaching supported unions and the necessity of workers to be active union members.

Hayes was an excellent coordinator of a national labor school network, developing course outlines and a newsletter that kept school directors and teachers up-to-date. When Hayes became ill in 1944, Fr. (later Msgr.) George Higgins (1916-2002) of Chicago replaced him. Higgins went on to head CSAD for decades.

In his interviews for *Go to the Worker* Baker remembers Hayes growing suddenly grave, expressing regret that despite the many achievements of Catholic social action, U.S. workers lacked a meaningful role in the management of their workplaces. Baker is sure that if Hayes were still alive he would urge every worker to do the utmost to strengthen a local union or worker center. Hayes would encourage all of us to exercise our vocation and push for the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act (HR 842), now awaiting Senate passage. Introduced by Rep. Bobby Scott (2600 Washington Ave.

#1010, Newport News, VA 23607), the PRO Act will update the National Labor Relations Act of 1935.

Obtain *Go to the Worker* from NCL (PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$14).

130+ Years

Of Catholic Social Thought

By now, many people are aware of how some findings of modern science, especially in the field of quantum theory, echo the spiritual insights of religious mystics. One place of convergence lies in affirming the interconnectedness of all beings. The reality that interrelatedness is at the heart of existence is one message delivered in a little book by Italian theoretical physicist Carlo Rovelli, *Seven Brief Lessons on Physics* (Riverhead Books [2016]; \$12.12).

Considering what science has discovered in quantum mechanics and particle theory, he notes, “The world seems to be less about objects than about interactive relationships.” Physical reality is “a world of happenings, not of things.”

Rovelli pauses the discussion to ask: “Does this mean, as it seems to me, that we must accept the idea that reality is only interaction?” In any case he concludes that the deep reality of everything is connection and interrelationship.

We humans, of course, are a part of this physical world. It is illusory to think that we are separate or that we stand over/against the natural world. Rovelli makes this clear in this poetic reflection on what science tells us about our own elemental makeup: “We are made up of the same atoms and the same light signals as are exchanged between pine trees in the mountains and stars in the galaxies... We are descendants of the same parents as every living thing around us. We have great-grandparents in common with butterflies and larches.” He goes on to say, “We are an integral part of nature; we are nature, in one of its innumerable and infinitely variable expressions. This is what we have learned from our ever-increasing knowledge of things of this world.”

Pope Francis is fond of saying, “Everything is connected.” In his 2015 encyclical, *Care for Our Common Home*

(NCL, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$6.50), he writes: “Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth.”

Rest in Peace

Russ Tershy (1922-2022)

As a young adult Tershy got involved in Young Christian Worker movement and quickly became a national leader. At age 27 he was summoned from his home in San Francisco to YCW’s Chicago headquarters to spearhead fundraising. Upon returning to California, Tershy organized YCW cells, including integrated ones. He also opened a second headquarters in San Francisco.

Tershy was back in Chicago in the mid-1950s; this time to lead a YCW training center. Twice a year about 14 promising leaders from around the country would participate in a three-month training that included small group dynamics, cultural analysis, Catholic doctrine and more. He also raised money to send YCW leaders from the U.S. to South America where they assisted local cells. This effort was a forerunner to the Peace Corps.

In March 1961 President John Kennedy (1917-1963) named Sargent Shriver (1915-2011) as director of the Peace Corps. Shriver, who was involved in Catholic social action in Chicago, recruited supervisors from Catholic groups, including YCW. Tershy and wife Ellie directed the Peace Corps in Bolivia for two years.

In 1967 Tershy with Fr. Anthony Soto, OFM (1921-1996) founded Center for Employment Training (701 Vine St., San Jose, CA 95110; www.cetweb.edu). It now has 10 California locations plus one in Texas, one in Virginia and one in Chile. CET is considered among the best job training programs. CET is run like any job: start on time, value efficiency, measure results, and follow-through with good people.

Tershy is an example of a Catholic who for decades improved the world of work with patient attention to detail and with a knack for attracting other visionaries.

Happenings

Mennonite Economic Development Association (33 N. Market St. #400, Lancaster, PA 17603; www.meda.org) holds its annual convention November 3-6, 2022. Its magazine, *The Marketplace*, is consistently inspiring with stories of excellent businesses both stateside and in Africa, South America and elsewhere. Plus thoughtful snippets, book reviews and analysis of workplace trends.

The Spring 2022 issue of *U.S. Catholic Historian* (Fr. David Endres, 6616 Beechmont Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45330; jrnlcirc@jh.edu) is devoted to “lay Catholics and ecclesial movements.” It contains an article about Dorothy Day (1897-1980), about Friendship House particularly in Chicago, about the National Federation of Catholic College Students and more.

At its annual meeting this past June the Catholic Theological Society of America (www.ctsa-online.org) gave its Fr. John Courtney Murray, SJ Award to Dan Finn of St. John’s University in Minnesota. Finn, a longtime friend of our NCL, is an expert on Christian ethics and economic structures. In addition to his duties at St. John’s, he directs the True Wealth of Nations project at University of Southern California (www.dornsife.usc.edu). Murray (1904-1967) influenced the composition and adoption of the *Declaration on Religious Liberty* at Vatican II (1962-1965).

INITIATIVES gives a shout out to NCL board member Tom Donnelly who with 60% of the vote won a primary race for judgeship on the Cook County Circuit Court. The general election is November 8, 2022.

Larry Suffredin also gets an INITIATIVES’ shout out. He is retiring after 20 years of service as commissioner of the Cook County Board. Suffredin was a 1977 founder of our NCL. He has been active in several civic endeavors over the years. INITIATIVES predicts that his virtue of social improvement will continue in his retirement.

INITIATIVES

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

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

Attention Readers

NCL is anxious about its cash flow. Some faithful donors have died. Postage and printing costs are up. Thus NCL needs ten new donors (individuals or institutions) to each donate about \$500 per year. Send along suggestions of potential donors to NCL (PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; wdroel@cs.com). NCL will provide further details.

“During Mass in many parishes a short prayer is offered up for the vocations of *holy priests, sisters, brothers and deacons*. Why shouldn't our prayers for vocations take a broader view, urging all our young people toward a true calling that will serve the church, the community and creation in different ways?”—Kevin Clarke (*U.S. Catholic* [6/22], 205 W. Monroe St., Chicago, IL 60606)