



## Why Unions?

People with the same concerns often get together to talk and look for answers.

That's exactly what a union is all about.

American workers have been joining together in democratic unions since the end of the 18th century.

Collective bargaining remains a uniquely American success story.

The way that unions address the most direct needs of their membership is through labor-management negotiations, sitting at a bargaining table with the employer.

Contracts are bargained by democratically elected union representatives who come to the table as equals of their management counterparts.

Through the give and take of the bargaining process, they establish equitable wages, working conditions, job safety and job security, and a system for resolving disputes - a grievance procedure.

*from AFL-CIO publications # 164 & P-189-0892-350*

*from the President...*

## "DO WE HAVE ANY RIGHTS?"

Each year, as spring returns, so does the ritual of letters of intent for thousands of non-unionized Catholic school teachers across the United States. No matter how many years' service these teachers have given to Catholic education, they anxiously wait each year to see if they will be "invited back." If it is thumbs up, they can exhale. If it is thumbs down, they are out of jobs and have no recourse. There is no way to challenge the termination. In fact, since the teacher only signed a one-year contract, he or she will be told that this is not really a termination. A contract for next year is just not being offered.

Throughout the year, I hear from teachers who are seeking a better way for schools to run and for teachers to be treated. Reprinted below are two examples of recent e-mails. All identifying information has been omitted. When you read them, you will understand why.

"I am requesting your advice and direction on how I could become better informed to help myself and other teachers in the event of confrontations and difficulties with parents, unjust administrators, etc. I am getting tired of dismissive attitudes and lack of respect for

*- cont'd on page 5*

NACST President Rita Schwartz met recently with Interfaith Worker Justice Executive Director, Kim Bobo, during Kim's recent visit to Philadelphia.

For information on the organization, go to [www.iwj.org](http://www.iwj.org)



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## Too-low Salaries Will Force School Closings, Workshop Told

*A nine year old article reported by Nancy Frazier O'Brien on the Catholic News Service, March 13, 2001*

Catholic leaders who fear that raising the salaries of teachers in Catholic schools might cause some schools to close must face the fact that a teacher shortage will force closings if salaries do not improve, the director of personnel services for the Archdiocese of Chicago said March 12 [2001].

Carol Fowler, who coordinates the work of 14 agencies which oversee all of the human resources functions in one of the nation's largest archdioceses, spoke on "Justice in the Workplace" at a national gathering in Chicago.

Fowler said the Chicago Archdiocese has about 6,000 teachers in its Catholic schools "and we pay them terribly" -- about half the salary of teachers in local public schools.

But every time there is a serious move to fix the problem, she said, "we come up against (the question of) how many schools will we have to close." But it is more likely that school closings will come when there are no longer teachers willing to work for half the pay, she added.

"We're not going to survive unless we do something about it," Fowler said.

Her workshop presentation focused on issues of compensation and benefits for church employees, and opened with a quote from Pope John Paul II's "Laborem Exercens" that said "a just wage is the concrete means of verifying the justice of the whole economic system"

"It seems to me that what applies to the world should also apply to the church," Fowler said.

She also cited canons of the Code of Canon Law stipulating that "administrators of goods" in the church "are to observe meticulously the civil law pertaining to labor and social policy" and to "pay employees a just and decent wage so that they may provide appropriately for their needs and those of their family."

And even though the church is exempt from certain labor laws - such as unemployment compensation and the Family and Medical Leave Act - in some jurisdictions, Fowler said she did not always think it was just for the church as employer to take those exemptions.

Pension plans vary widely from diocese to diocese, but many still operate on the outdated assumption that female employees will not be dependent on their own pensions but are "second-income women" whose retirement will be funded mainly by their husbands' pension plans, Fowler said.

Asked about the likelihood that pension plans could become portable from one diocese to another, Fowler said, "Dioceses do not want to give up control of millions of dollars in pension plans."

## 2009-2010 Lay Teachers' Salaries

diocese	Basic Scale with BA/BS		Basic Scale with M/A/ equivalent		Top Salary		Tuition Charged		comment		
	starting	maximum	#steps to reach max	starting	maximum	beyond MA	# credits or degree	# steps to reach		elementary	secondary
St. Louis MO diocesan secondary	26669	48886	22	27969	57034	57951	MA+30	32	n/a	6,050- 8,250	1
Camden NJ diocesan secondary	32143	68049	35	34309	70215	72381	2MA/PhD	35	n/a	6,850	1
Newark NJ Queen of Peace High School	31315	51115		32665	52465	76380			n/a	7,950	
Trenton NJ St. Denis elementary	30345	48552	22	31345	49552	n/a	n/a	n/a	4,140	n/a	1
Trenton NJ Holy Cross High School	35900	54050	26	36350	54500	68390	MA+30 or PhD	26	n/a	7,500	1
Trenton NJ St. John Vianney High School	28000	59975	33	29569	61714	63450	PhD	33	n/a	10,000	1
Buffalo NY diocesan elementary	21150- 25125	34253	20-40	21750- 25725	35253	43612		43	2,000- 2,600	n/a	5
Cleveland OH diocesan secondary	29000- 33384	47310	34	31192	59292	61484	PhD	34	n/a	6,400- 8,350	1
Columbus OH diocesan elem & secondary, Franklin County	31204	49580	30	38220	61219	68281	Ph D	30	2,475- 4,650	6,700- 8,350	1
Youngstown OH parish elementary	16800	33600	30	18144	36288	38976	MA+30	30	1,600- 2,498	n/a	5
Youngstown OH diocesan secondary	29435	47512	30	31722	52887	55029	MA+30	30	n/a	5,450- 6,000	1
Alltoona/Johinstown PA private secondary	22000	no maximum		22500- 23000	no maximum				n/a	5,370- 5,400	5
Greensburg PA diocesan secondary	27400	55700	32	27800	56100		MA+30	28	n/a	6,500- 7,500	1
Philadelphia PA diocesan secondary	35350	68040	35	35850	68840	69480	PhD	35	n/a	5,150	1
Pittsburgh PA diocesan elementary	28100	47069	21	28750	47759	49669	MA+30	25	varies	varies	1

1. There is one salary scale that is standard for the school(s) being reported.

5. Salaries vary from school to school; therefore, numbers reflect the lowest school and the highest school being reported - all other schools falls between these numbers.

*Nonaffiliated school survey results are available at [www.nacst.com](http://www.nacst.com).*

*Affiliated Locals*

**Altoona Johnstown Catholic School Teachers Association**  
(Diocese of Altoona Johnstown PA)  
Michelle Kirk

**Association of Catholic Teachers**  
(Archdiocese of Philadelphia PA)  
[www.act1776.com](http://www.act1776.com)  
Rita Schwartz

**Catholic Teachers Union - NJ**  
(Diocese of Camden NJ)  
[www.ctunj.com](http://www.ctunj.com)  
Bill Blumenstein

**Central Ohio Association of Catholic Educators**  
(Diocese of Columbus OH)  
[www.coace.com](http://www.coace.com)  
Kathleen Mahoney

**Cleveland High School and Academy Lay Teachers Association**  
(Diocese of Cleveland OH)  
Michael DeSantis

**DELTA**  
(Diocese of Worcester MA)  
Jonathan Meagher

**Diocesan Elementary Teachers Association**  
(Diocese of Buffalo NY)  
Sue Manzella

**Federation of Pittsburgh Diocesan Teachers**  
(Diocese of Pittsburgh PA)  
Russ DelVecchio

**Greater Hartford Catholic Education Association**  
(Archdiocese of Hartford CT)  
Paul Fitzpatrick

**Greensburg Diocesan Teachers Association**  
(Diocese of Greensburg PA)  
Kreg Mendus

***Catholic School Teachers:  
Why Unionize?***

*keep good teachers in Catholic schools by:*

- putting the Church's labor teaching into practice
- having a voice in working conditions, salaries, and benefits
  - fairly resolving legitimate disputes
- treating teachers with respect & professionalism

***Catholic School Teachers:  
How Can We Unionize?***

- by talking to your colleagues at school
- by becoming informed of locals in your area
  - by contacting NACST:

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email: [nacst.nacst@verizon.net](mailto:nacst.nacst@verizon.net)

internet: [www.nacst.com](http://www.nacst.com)

***Internet Organizing Resources***

Information about NACST and the unionization of Catholic school teachers is available at [www.nacst.com](http://www.nacst.com).

Locals which have their own sites are: ACT [Philadelphia] [www.act1776.com](http://www.act1776.com); COACE [Columbus] [www.coace.com](http://www.coace.com); CTU [Camden] [www.ctunj.com](http://www.ctunj.com)

*Among the basic rights of the human person must be counted the right of freely founding labor unions.*

*These unions should be truly able to represent the workers and to contribute to the proper arrangement of economic life.*

*Another such right is that of taking part freely in the activity of these unions without risk of reprisals.*

*(#68, Gaudium et Spes, Vatican II)*

from the President...

**"DO WE HAVE ANY RIGHTS?"**

*cont'd from page 1*

our teachers. And, unfortunately, these attitudes often come from those with much power over us. We have just come through a very trying time with a problematic administration who, thankfully, are gone now. But I have been reflecting on how we could prepare for the future and be more able to deal with such difficulties before they occur again."

"I write with great trepidation. If my administration were to know of this communication, my one year contract would NOT be renewed for next year. The current regime of our institution rules with fear and intimidation and has chosen not to renew contracts for teachers who have rocked the boat or questioned them in any way. There is no system of checks and balances, nor anyone within the structure to whom we can appeal any decision. Many teachers have discussed the need for a union but fear retribution. There are many issues dealing with the rights of teachers, but we have been told not to discuss confidential matters with anyone. Do we have any rights? How do we exercise those rights without losing our jobs? What if too many people fear losing their jobs to step forward?"

The teachings of the Catholic Church are crystal clear on the rights of all employees, especially those who work for the Church. Words like "fear" and "intimidation" are nowhere to be found. "My way or the highway" is in total opposition to the Code of Canon Law, the encyclicals of Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI and the U.S. Bishops' Economic Pastoral as well as the Bishops' recently published document on the right of Catholic Health Care workers to unionize.

Teachers in Catholic elementary and secondary schools must "step forward." They must join together so that they can speak with a strong, unified voice. They must fight for their rights to organize and to negotiate wages and working conditions with their employers, be they in a single school or a group of schools within a diocese.

It is time for teachers in non-unionized Catholic schools to give notice to their employers of their "intent to stay."

Let the National Association of Catholic School Teachers know what we can do to help.



*Affiliated Locals*

**NACST @ St. John Vianney**  
(Diocese of Trenton NJ)  
Judith Cumba

**Queen of Peace H.S. Lay Teachers Association**  
(Archdiocese of Newark NJ)  
Donna Giovia

**St. Denis Teachers Association**  
(Diocese of Trenton NJ)  
Janne Darata

**St. Joseph's Teachers Association**  
(Archdiocese of Newark NJ)  
Darlene Fisher

**St. Louis Archdiocesan Teachers Association**  
(Archdiocese of St. Louis MO)  
Patricia Spellman

**St. Rose Teachers Association**  
(Diocese of Trenton NJ)  
Sean McDonald  
Bonnie Scherr

**Scranton Diocese Association of Catholic Teachers**  
(Diocese of Scranton PA)  
[www.sdiact.com](http://www.sdiact.com)  
Michael Milz

**Secondary Lay Teachers Association**  
(Diocese of Buffalo NY)  
Doug Bowers

**Union County Catholic Education Association**  
(Archdiocese of Newark NJ)  
Marc Berger

**Youngstown Confederation of Diocesan Teachers**  
(Diocese of Youngstown OH)  
Barbara Demesko

*from the editor...*

## **Recommit to Education through Unions**

According to statistics compiled by the USCCB and NCEA, at the end of the 2002-2003 school year there were 8,114 Catholic elementary and secondary schools in the U.S. At the end of the 2008-2009 school year there were 830 fewer schools [7,284]. During the same six year period the total number of students dropped by 423,799 [from 2,616,330 to 2,192,531].

From the establishment of the first U.S. Catholic school system by Elizabeth Ann Seton and John Neumann, through the 1970's, Catholic school education had been a recognized priority of the institutional Church in the nation.

Through waves of Catholic immigration, when new parishes were created, the school building was the first tangible evidence that the Church was looking to the future of Catholicism in the country.

For more than a century, it was clear that the institutional Church was committed to preparing students to take their places in the life of the nation - dioceses took the responsibility to foster and promote Catholic schools. Today, Catholics are a significant presence in the federal legislature and judiciary - promoting the Gospel values of justice.

Beginning in the 1970's, as the number of members of religious communities in Catholic education dwindled, lay teachers filled the positions in Catholic schools - to continue the Catholic community's commitment to the future of the Church and the country. Lay teachers now make up 96% of the full-time staff of the nation's Catholic schools.

For forty years, the work of lay teachers has sustained the mission of Catholic education in the nation. At the same time, dioceses have been withdrawing support for the schools. In the past decade, individual schools have been "spun-off" from the resources of the Catholic community in local dioceses. Left to their own devices, schools significantly increased tuitions while keeping salaries low, thus forcing parents and teachers to bear the burden of sustaining Catholic schools [contrary to the teaching of the U.S. Bishops' 1986 Economic Pastoral].

To stop the decline in the number of schools and students, dioceses must re-commit resources to the schools. The voices of Catholic school teachers must be heard in this process.

Catholic school teacher unions, based in the social justice teaching of the Church, are the best method for insuring that teachers, with their invaluable experiences in the schools, have significant input to the continuation of the Church's educational mission.

If the legacy of Seton and Neumann is to continue, it is essential for teachers to organize.

For the good of the students... For the good of the schools...For the good of the nation...ORGANIZE.

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