

**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:

**Rita Schwartz, President  
NACST  
Suite 903  
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Philadelphia, PA 19103  
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email:  
nacst.nacst@verizon.net  
internet: www.nacst.com**

**NACST Members rallying at the USCCB meeting in Washington DC**



*from the President...*

**THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE:  
The Church Must Practice What It Preaches**

The spring issue of *Newsworthy* is what we call our “organizing” issue, since it is distributed at the NCEA Convention where thousands of non-unionized teachers walk by the NACST Booth and a great many pick up the Newsletter along with brochures that explain how to start a union in their schools.

Why is it so important for NACST to be there? Why do we do it year after year? A recent e-mail tells it all.

*We do not have a union here and, right now, I am wondering what it would take to get one. Things are not good where I teach; there seems to be a dramatic lack of understanding of Catholic Social Teaching in regard to how we are treated. I wonder what kinds of reasons faculties need to start a union; how does one go about getting going; is there any recourse if a person gets fired for talking about taking such action or for activities in organizing? I really don't know where to start. Any help or guidance or information you could give me would be enormously appreciated. I have never been involved in a union, let alone started one. I think it's time.*

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**The Right to Organize**

*from p. 1*

According to the latest figures from NCEA, lay teachers in Catholic schools constitute well over 90% of the total teaching force. Yet, close to 90% of lay teachers in Catholic schools have no real say over their salaries, benefits or working conditions. They have no effective due process; they have no job security. That, in a nutshell, is what a teacher association, a union, is all about.

A Union is an organized voice, a recognized representative that can sit as an equal partner at the bargaining table and speak for teachers. And, sad to say, this is the last thing that many diocesan officials (bishops included) want their teachers to have.

I never grow weary of quoting from Catholic Social Teaching. The words of our Popes and our Bishops are strong and clear on the rights of all workers to form a union and to participate without risk of reprisal. This means Catholic school teachers, too. We are told that in matters of labor relations, the Church should be exemplary. Instead, it is business as usual: Do as I say, not as I do.

With very few exceptions, Catholic school teachers do not have the protection of this country's labor laws. Instead of approaching an employer with the National Labor Relations Act or a particular state's labor relations statutes, teachers seeking representation and collective bargaining have only the Church's teachings and they are patently ignored by Church leaders and seriously twisted by diocesan attorneys. Bishops such as Raymond Burke in St. Louis make a mockery of Church teaching with statements such as "Neither the Archdiocese nor individual parishes will recognize or bargain collectively with any organization as a representative of teachers." Recently elevated to the status of Cardinal, Boston Archbishop Sean O'Malley stood silently by and watched as the teachers in his eight Archdiocesan high schools were stripped of union representation and made to sign documents making them "employees at will" who could be subject to whatever rules new Boards of Trustees decided to create, however and whenever they wanted.

NACST continues to work with and fight for teachers in Catholic schools to help them achieve the rights championed by the Catholic Church for all other workers, but so often denied them.

It is time for accountability. Church leaders like Cardinal Sean O'Malley and Archbishop Raymond Burke, who fail so horribly to practice what they preach, need a wake-up call as do any number of other Church leaders. Justice and Dignity are not just catch phrases. They must form the foundation of the Church's labor relations policy just as they form the basis of the Church's Social Teachings.



## The Benefits of NACST Affiliation



***Sue Manzella***  
*President*  
*DETA (Buffalo)*

NACST gives us a broader perspective of the various problems at hand (as with the situation in St. Louis). Through the National we have been kept up to date and informed and also been mobilized to participate in St. Louis's ongoing struggles. We are NOT alone.

On the practical side, the National not only dispenses necessary information and training, it offers financial assistance for both organizing and fighting grievances. Without this support, many of us would not have the financial means to continue to be heard.

***Patricia Spellman***  
*President*  
*SLATA (St. Louis)*



Since being elected President of SLATA I have found my association with the NACST to be irreplaceable. I came into office at a time when many concerns were in the process of being discussed and/or settled. The officers of NACST were a true resource to me and the encouragement and straightforward answers I received were greatly appreciated. I also consider the annual convention to be of great value. I have come to understand the importance of teacher organizations, especially for Catholic School teachers. It gives me a sense of pride in knowing that we support the efforts of so many teachers in achieving social justice.



***Janne Darata***  
*President*  
*St. Denis Teachers' Association*

In 2000, unionizing was a necessary but scary prospect for the faculty of our small elementary school. Affiliating with the NACST was the smartest move we ever made. The NACST was there from the start to help, support, inform, and advise us, and they continue to be there for us whenever we need them.

**Lynn McGill**  
*President*

*QPHS Lay Teachers' Association*

NACST has been an invaluable source of support and resources for the Queen of Peace High School Lay Teachers' Association. When going through contract negotiations, the National is there helping direct our team in putting together proposals, developing strategies, and finding ways through the rough spots in order to achieve the best for our members. The National has also been of assistance in obtaining legal counsel for grievances and even provided financial support to share the cost of protecting our membership.



**Mary Chubb**  
*President*  
*ACEE*



Ten years ago when the Association of Catholic Elementary Educators (ACEE) was in its infancy as the union to represent elementary educators in the Archdiocese of St. Louis, who do you think trekked out to St. Louis to give us teachers encouragement and direction? You guessed it, Rita Schwartz! With Rita's encouragement and that of Mary John, then President of SLATA, the union for our secondary colleagues, we embarked on our journey for recognition of our elementary teachers' union that continues to this day. Constant resistance from our bishops and pastors in St. Louis to grant recognition to our union has forged a close bond and friendship with NACST which has provided us with invaluable advice, moral support, and financial assistance.

**Affiliated Locals**

**Altoona Johnstown Catholic School Teachers Association**  
(Diocese of Altoona Johnstown PA)  
Richard Hatch

**Association of Catholic Elementary Educators**  
(Archdiocese of St. Louis MO)  
Mary Chubb

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

**Association of Catholic Teachers**  
(Diocese of Syracuse NY)  
Bernadette Kapps

**Boston Archdiocesan Teachers Association**  
(Archdiocese of Boston MA)  
[www.nacst.com/BATA/home.htm](http://www.nacst.com/BATA/home.htm)  
Tom Norris

**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)  
Mike Ryba

*Affiliated Locals*

**Greensburg Diocesan Teachers Association**

(Diocese of Greensburg PA)  
Kreg Mendus

**NACST @ St. John Vianney**

(Diocese of Trenton NJ)  
Jerelyn Dougherty

**Queen of Peace H.S. Lay Teachers Association**

(Archdiocese of Newark NJ)  
Kathy Kiszka

**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)  
MaryBeth McCaffrey

**St. Teresa Educators Association**

(Diocese of Harrisburg PA)  
Deborah Foote

**Scranton Diocese Association of Catholic Teachers**

(Diocese of Scranton PA)  
[www.sdact.com](http://www.sdact.com)  
Michael Milz

**Secondary Lay Teachers Association**

(Diocese of Buffalo NY)  
Doug Bowers

**Union County Catholic Education Association**

(Archdiocese of Newark NJ)  
Phyllis Barone

**Youngstown Confederation of Diocesan Teachers**

(Diocese of Youngstown OH)  
Barbara Demesko

## 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*

## Internet Organizing Resources

For information about NACST and the unionization of Catholic school teachers the address is [www.nacst.com](http://www.nacst.com).

Locals which have their own sites are:

ACEE [St. Louis] [hometown.aol.com/acee1312/myhomepage/index.html](http://hometown.aol.com/acee1312/myhomepage/index.html)

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)

GCHEA [Hartford] [www.gchea.org](http://www.gchea.org)

SDACT [Scranton] [www.sdact.com](http://www.sdact.com)

In addition, the following locals have information pages posted through the National website -

BATA [Boston MA]

CHALTA [Cleveland OH]

DETA [Buffalo, NY]

NACST@St. John Vianney [Holmdel, NJ]

UCCEA [New Providence, NJ]

YDCT [Youngstown OH]

## So says the Church...

*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)*

**NACST 2006  
Convention/Conference  
Philadelphia, PA  
October 6-8, 2006**

*from the Editor...*

## Organize With NACST

Today 163,004 U.S. Catholic school teachers are the lay employees who make up 94% of U.S. Catholic elementary and secondary school faculties.

For more than 110 years the Church's social justice teaching has asserted, affirmed and re-affirmed these teachers' right to unionize and bargain collectively.

For more than 27 years, the National Association of Catholic School Teachers has been the umbrella organization for over 20 local unions.

NACST offers local Catholic school teacher unions **service** - organizing grants, negotiation workshops, leadership conferences, a legal defense fund and information sharing with other locals throughout the nation.

NACST offers local Catholic school teacher unions **experience** - literally scores of contracts for the past 26 years as well as numerous grievance and arbitration hearings, worked out by the locals with NACST assistance.

NACST offers local Catholic school teacher unions understanding of our Church and schools' **mission** - to put into practice the gospel values of justice in all its facets, NACST members live the Church's teaching in our schools and unions.

NACST has the service, experience and mission to help Catholic school teachers to unionize.

Use NACST.