

**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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The Scandal of Catholic Teachers' Pay

from an article by Professor Rupert J. Ederer in the April 2000 New Oxford Review

Lay teachers in America's Catholic primary and secondary schools are some of the lowest-paid high-achievers around.

After vocations to religious life plummeted, [parishes] invariably maintained their schools partially at the expense of the lay teachers who were now asked to accept far less than even the minimum pay level at the public school down the street.

The disparity is far too great.

What Catholic school teachers are paid ... represents a scandalous injustice, and it is high time for it to be eliminated.

What we are dealing with here is not simply *social* justice, but the even more basic *strict* justice that governs exchange transactions.

This is called *commutative* justice - the same justice involved in purchase and sales transactions, and in borrowing-lending contracts.

In normal sales transactions, we do not ask the merchant to accept less than a just price, nor do we ask him to do so in the name of charity.

Depriving a worker of his just wage is in the same category as short-changing someone in a sales transaction. *cont'd on p. 2*



NACST members at a working session of the the annual convention

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Salaries *from p. 1*

[Others] adopt the more pietistic approach that people who work for Catholic schools at low wages are involved in the lay apostolate, and they should not expect to be paid on the same terms as their colleagues in the secular order.

In other words, they should be happy to volunteer their services, in whole or in part.

Implicitly, this suggests their living under a virtual vow of poverty.

Persons who adopt a pietistic approach are proposing that in dealing with her lay employees the Church is exempt from or entitled to violate the cardinal virtue of justice.

In other words, the Church is entitled to beg the services of teachers who have the same family responsibilities as their counterparts in state-supported schools.

Serious reflection on the entire situation leads to the conclusion that a large and worthwhile segment of our Catholic laity is being treated in a patronizing or unfair manner.

Even the fact that some of them do not realize their plight - or accept it- does not justify it.

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 ...

JUSTICE AND DIGNITY: THE RIGHTS OF ALL CATHOLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS

Each year, during Easter week, officers from the National Association of Catholic School Teachers spend their days in the NACST booth at the NCEA Convention talking with teachers and distributing materials detailing the advantages of having a teachers' union. One of the first bits of information we discover is that a great many of these teachers are not aware that there is a national Catholic Teachers Union. We next learn that they have been told by their principals that their employer, the Catholic Church, has made it clear that they are not allowed to unionize.

How could this misinformation have occurred when, in document after document, Catholic social teaching champions the rights of workers? Since justice and dignity are two of the guiding principles of this teaching, you would think that a great many more elementary and secondary teachers would be working under a negotiated contract that includes job security, due process and negotiated salary and benefits.

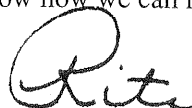
NACST members throughout the United States know well the benefits of union representation. However, in order to achieve the rights guaranteed by the teachings of our Church, it was often necessary for these teachers to stand together, to hold their administrators' feet to the fire, as it were. Unfortunately, school and diocesan administrators, many of whom started their careers as Catholic school teachers, seem to forget or, what is worse, disregard the social justice pronouncements and revert to teachings contained in the pages of Employer 101.

When you are an employee at will (not represented by a union or protected by a union contract), school and diocesan officials can make whatever rules they want and your recourse is, basically, to 'take it or leave it.' When you have no voice, you can be terminated with or without cause and you can be disciplined without a way to have your case presented to a neutral party.

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 laws and these are, many times, patently ignored by Church leaders and seriously twisted by diocesan attorneys.

You are not children. Far from it. You are well-educated professionals to whom thousands of parents entrust their children. You have every right to have a say over your work life. You are entitled to be "full partners in the educational enterprise," as promised by the U.S. Bishops in "To Teach As Jesus Did."

The National Association of Catholic School Teachers 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. Let us know how we can help you.



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

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

Tom Norris

Catholic Teachers Union - NJ
(Diocese of Camden NJ)

www.ctunj.com

Bill Blumenstein

Central Ohio Association of Catholic Educators
(Diocese of Columbus OH)

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 DeVecchio

Greater Hartford Catholic Education Association

(Archdiocese of Hartford CT)

Paul Fitzpatrick

Affiliated Locals

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

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

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
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

The Benefits of NACST Affiliation

from a presentation to local members by former COACE president Linda Haas

When I made the acquaintance of John Reilly and Rita Schwartz from NACST [and] when I got to meet the officers from other associations I realized the importance of joining NACST. Here is a resource to help make our association stronger.

There is strength in numbers. We will be stronger as part of NACST. We will have access to advice from all the other organizations in the country.

As we struggle to negotiate more and better benefits we see the need to be better trained and better educated. The National offers training for Officers at National Conventions. NACST also offers training for negotiations, grievance resolution, executive committee duties and representatives.

I want us to be part of the national for many reasons. The main reason is for the officers. If we want to become stronger and more professional we should be part of this national professional organization.

U. S. Catholic Schools

data from the NCEA 2005-2006 annual schools report

Total no. of U.S. Catholic schools: 7,589 [elementary 6,386 secondary 1,203]

Total enrollment: 2,363,220 [elementary 1,726,773 secondary 636,447]

Non-Catholic enrollment 13.5%

minority student enrollment 27% [of the total enrollment]

Total Full-time Faculty: 152,502 [elementary 112,844 secondary 32,505]

Lay Teachers 95.3%

Tuition

mean elementary parish school tuition \$2,607 [61.7% of actual per pupil cost \$4,268]

mean secondary freshman tuition \$5,870 [69.5% of actual per pupil cost \$7,200]

Internet Organizing Resources

For information about NACST and the unionization of Catholic school teachers the address is www.nacst.com.

Locals which have their own sites are:

ACEE [St. Louis] hometown.aol.com/acee1312/myhomepage/index.html

ACT [Philadelphia] www.act1776.com

CHALTA [Cleveland OH] www.chalta.org

COACE [Columbus] www.coace.com

CTU [Camden] www.ctunj.com

GHCEA [Hartford] www.ghcea.org

SDACT [Scranton] www.sdact.com

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

BATA [Boston MA]

DETA [Buffalo, NY]

NACST@St. John Vianney [Holmdel, NJ]

UCCEA [New Providence, NJ]

YDCT [Youngstown OH]

NACST Affiliate Salary Survey 2006-2007

salary survey report for NACST affiliates, to see all reporting Catholic schools, including those not affiliated with NACST, go to www.nacst.com

Name of Diocese	Basic Scale with BA/BS		Scale with MA/Equivalent		Top Salary			Tuition Charged		Comments	
	Starting	Maximum	# Steps to Max	Starting	Maximum	beyond MA	# credits or degree	# steps to reach	elem		sec/dy
Diocese of Worcester MA (Diocesan Schools)	31415	55700	19	33915	59871	61371	MA+30	19	3375	6120-6425	#1, #7
Archdiocese of St. Louis MO (Diocesan Elem Schools)	24300	38845	26	25000	48337	50906	MA+30	33	1000-	5409-	#1
(Diocesan Secondary Schools)	25673	38279	20	26973	53397	54255	MA+30	30	1475	7500	#1
Diocese of Camden NJ (Diocesan Secondary Schools)	28148	62103	32	30127	64082	66060	PhD/2MA	32	n/a	5500	#1
Archdiocese of Newark NJ Queen of Peace High School	29090	48890	30	30340	50140	50740	MA+45	30	n/a	6800	#1
Diocese of Trenton NJ St. Denis Elem School	27800	42350	20	28800	43350	n/a	n/a	n/a	3950	n/a	#1
Holy Cross High School	33200	63677	45	33650	64449	65390	MA+30/PhD	45	n/a	7000	#1
St. John Vianney High School	26594	52943	30	28040	24478	56011	PhD	30	n/a	7800	#1
Diocese of Buffalo NY (Parish Elem Schools)	18105-23900	31950	40	24500	39499	n/a	n/a	n/a	1600-2300	n/a	#5
Archdiocese of Cleveland OH (Diocesan Secondary Schools)	27000	44280	31	29160	55890	58050	PhD	31	n/a	8000	#1
Diocese of Columbus OH (Franklin Cty Elem & Sec)	29604	48168	30	35620	58880	64268	PhD	30	2193-4000	5475-6390	#1
Diocese of Youngstown OH (Parish Elem Schools)	16800-23000	30912-46345	24-35	18144-24610	33600-47955	36288-49565	MA+30	24	1500-2300	n/a	#5
(Diocesan Secondary School)	27800	45610	30	29900	50650	52750	MA+30	35	n/a	5325	#1
Diocese of Greensburg PA (Diocesan Secondary Schools)	27400	54550	31	27400	55350	56150	PhD	31	n/a	5950	#1
Archdiocese of Philadelphia PA (Diocesan Secondary Schools)	32400	62790	32	32900	63590	64230	PhD	32	n/a	4200	#1
Diocese of Pittsburgh PA (Diocesan Secondary Schools)	23800	60075	36	25100	61550	62650	PhD	36	n/a	6200-7500	#1
Diocese of Scranton PA (Unionized Elem Schools)	22425-27000	29888-50100	30	23560-28500	40323-51100	n/a	n/a	n/a	2500-4500	n/a	#5
(Unionized Secondary Schools)	23000-28000	50381-56505	35	24000-29700	51381-57405	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4500-6200	#1

Comments

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 fall between these numbers.
7. Salaries reported are for the 2007-2008 school year.

from the Editor: *Organize*

NACST members involved in organizing locals easily recall the numerous difficulties faced when locals and affiliates organized.

Fears of losing employment, intimidation from school administrators and the frustration involved in working in systems which treated them as servants are not soon forgotten.

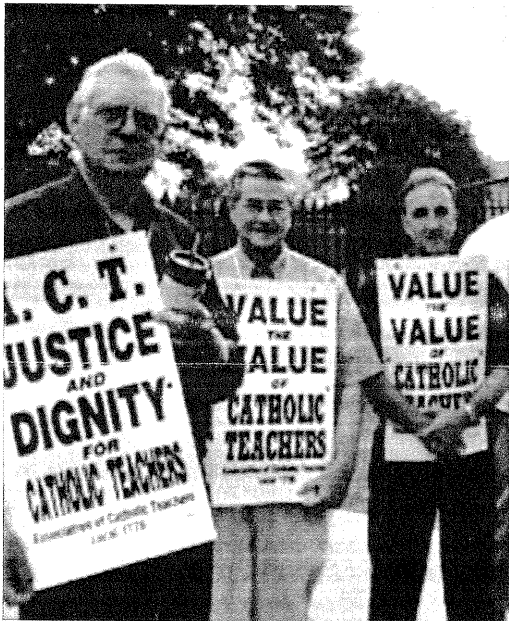
Organizing has been ongoing for more than a quarter century in Catholic schools.

The national Catholic school union movement has received praise from U.S. Church leaders such as Msgr. George Higgins, Rev. Richard McBrien and Bishop Thomas Gumbleton.

Catholic school teachers have received praise from nearly every Ordinary of the Dioceses in which we work.

If not for the work of Catholic school unions, many of those same teachers would have left the schools and systems which produce graduates who are exceptional for their academic achievements and personal integrity.

For the good of our students ... for the good of our schools ... organize.



ACT members on the line

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)