

## ACT Settlements

The Association of Catholic Teachers [ACT] successfully concluded negotiations for two bargaining units.

In Philadelphia, among the provisions of the new one year contract are: salary increase of \$1200 for the year, with a starting salary of \$39,800; addition of a third medical plan option [a Health Savings Account] other than the PPO and HMO plans already in effect, with no increases for premium contributions, deductibles or co-pays; and, an increase in the Education Grant Fund, with reimbursement of \$2500 for Master's Degree and \$3000 for Doctoral Degree.

At Holy Cross in Delran, NJ ACT members ratified a one year deal with a salary freeze and continuation of benefits for retirees.

*from the President ...*

## LABOR DAY 2017

### THE QUEST FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE CONTINUES

As we move ever closer to the end of summer, all of us in the teaching vocation are waiting in anticipation for our new students to arrive, hopefully, as excited as we are to begin the school year.

One of the things I miss most as President of both the National Association of Catholic School Teachers and the President of the Association of Catholic Teachers in Philadelphia is the excitement of returning to my classroom each year. I, now, concentrate on assisting teachers in Catholic schools to acquire what they need in their work lives so that they can continue to teach while supporting themselves and their families. This also includes having a say over the conditions under which they work. We are all laborers in the vineyard, but how we labor and how we are treated is extremely important.

Since we, the teachers, responsible for those students entrusted to our care by their parents, are also employees, it is vital for us to make sure that the employer Church carries out its responsibilities to us. For the blueprint to this, I use two sources. Catholic Social Teaching, which includes papal encyclicals and bishops' pastorals, is a prime source of the Church's official position on the rights of workers, especially, the Church's own. There is also another benchmark that I use. I look to see how the Church implements for its own workers what it has written for others.

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*Rita Schwartz and ACT leaders addressing members at the Philadelphia ratification meeting September 5, 2017*

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## Two Challenges for the Labor Movement

*excerpts from Pope Francis' address June 28, 2017, to a delegation from the Italian Confederation of Workers' Unions (CISL) in the Vatican*

I would like to stress two epochal challenges that the labor movement must address and overcome today, if it wishes to continue to carry out its essential role for the common good.

The first is **prophecy**, and it has to do with the nature itself of the labor union, with its truest vocation. The labor union is expression of the *prophetic profile* of society. The labor union is born and reborn every time that, as the biblical prophets, it gives voice to those that do not have it, it denounces the fact of the poor one "sold for a pair of sandals" (Cf. *Amos 2:6*), unmasks the powerful that trample the rights of the most frail workers, defends the cause of the stranger, of the last, of the "rejected." As the great tradition of **CISL** also demonstrates, the labor movement has its great seasons when it is prophecy.

Second challenge: **innovation**. Prophets are watchmen, who watch from their lookout. A labor union must also watch *on the walls of the city of work*, as a watchman that guards and protects those inside the city of work, *but that also guards and protects those outside the walls*. The labor union does not carry out its essential function of social innovation if it only watches over those who are *inside*, if it only protects the rights of *those already working* or retired. This is done, but it is half of your work. Your vocation is also to protect those who *still do not have rights*.



*from the President ...*

In ECONOMIC JUSTICE FOR ALL, the U.S. Bishops promulgated a teaching for how the employer Church should treat those whom it employs.

**We bishops commit ourselves to the principle that those who serve the Church—laity, clergy, and religious—should receive a sufficient livelihood and the social benefits provided by responsible employers in our nation.**

This is followed by

**All church institutions must also fully recognize the rights of employees to organize and bargain collectively with the institution through whatever association or organization they freely choose.**

In 1996, the Bishops followed up with A CATHOLIC FRAMEWORK FOR ECONOMIC LIFE:

**All people have the right to economic initiative, to productive work, to just wages and benefits, to decent working conditions as well as to organize and join unions or other associations.**

Recently, a group of teachers in a diocese in Pennsylvania approached their bishop to ask for representation and collective bargaining. In Pennsylvania, there is no law to protect the rights of teachers in Catholic schools. The only recourse the teachers have is to approach their bishop and petition for their rights as employees, rights guaranteed by Church teaching. The teachers said to their bishop:

Although the terms representative and collective bargaining may, in some instances, create disturbing images of a we-they relationship, that is the last thing the Association wishes to see. We believe that the teachings of our Church have provided the means for both teachers and administrators to come together to create a relationship based on openness and honesty, a relationship that recognizes the dignity and worth of all.

The response they received from the diocese is as follows:

**We do not feel that such representation would be appropriate and with the installation of a new principal any ongoing issues/concerns will be recognized and resolved under his new guidance... We thank you for your interest, but cannot agree to your representation.**

This Labor Day, it is especially disheartening to see that, once again, the employer Church chooses to present to others how a fair and just employer must act, while making its own rules for itself.

As the quest for social justice continues, I wish all of you a happy and productive school year.



## Affiliated Locals

### Altoona Johnstown Catholic School Teachers Association

(Diocese of  
Altoona Johnstown PA)  
Karen Blaisdell

### Association of Catholic Teachers

(Archdiocese of  
Philadelphia PA)  
www.act1776.com  
Rita Schwartz

### Catholic Teachers Union - NJ

(Diocese of Camden NJ)  
www.ctunj.com  
Mary Kay Rossi

### Central Ohio Association of Catholic Educators

(Diocese of Columbus  
OH)  
www.coace.com  
Erica Gowitzka

### Cleveland High School and Academy Lay Teachers Association

(Diocese of Cleveland  
OH)  
Michael DeSantis

### DELTA

(Diocese of Worcester  
MA)  
Kate Harris

### Diocesan Elementary Teachers Association

(Diocese of Buffalo NY)  
Joann Biggie

### Federation of Pittsburgh Diocesan Teachers

(Diocese of Pittsburgh PA)  
Brian Klisavage

***Affiliated Locals***

**Greater Hartford  
Catholic  
Education Association**

(Archdiocese of  
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Paul Fitzpatrick

**Greensburg Diocesan  
Teachers Association**

(Diocese of  
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Will Merchant

**NACST @**

**St. John Vianney**  
(Diocese of Trenton NJ)  
Lisa Lenn

**St. Louis Archdiocesan  
Teachers Association**

(Archdiocese of  
St. Louis MO)  
Patricia Spellman

**St. Rose Teachers  
Association**

(Diocese of Trenton NJ)  
Colleen Reilly  
Laura Urspruch

**Secondary Lay Teachers  
Association**

(Diocese of Buffalo NY)  
Chris Rusin

**Union County Catholic  
Education Association**

(Archdiocese of  
Newark NJ)  
Jaclyn Church

**Youngstown  
Confederation of  
Diocesan Teachers**

(Diocese of  
Youngstown OH)  
Barbara McVicker

**Reilly Scholarship Winners**

Winners of the 2017 John J. Reilly Memorial Scholarships have been chosen from a field of 17 nominated high school seniors.

The scholarships are awarded annually to help defray the cost of a college education for outstanding children of NACST members.

The students will receive \$1000 in each of their four years of study, making each scholarship a \$4000 value over each student's course of collegiate studies.

Congratulations to the winners of the 2017 Reilly Scholarship:

**Jesse K. Krieger,**  
son of COACE member Bart Krieger,  
Columbus

**Daniel T. Ranciglio,**  
son of SLATA member Kristine Ranciglio,  
St. Louis

The scholarships are awarded in remembrance of John J. Reilly, the founding President of NACST.

**39th NACST  
Convention**

The 39th annual NACST Convention/Conference will be held October 6-8 at the Ritz-Carlton hotel in Cleveland.

The topic of the convention is "Legal Issues for Catholic Teacher Unions." Presenters will be Martin Milz, chief NACST legal counsel and Ben Eisner of Spear, Wilderman.

Election of officers for the National Executive Committee will be held as part of the convention business.

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