

from the Editor ...

Union Value

From a macro perspective, unions are undoubtedly invaluable for American society. Holding the premise that "justice for all" is an ideal to which American society should progress, the value of unions for the US labor force is apparent. Considering just one factor of economic justice, when union membership was relatively strong [34% of wage and salaried workers were represented by unions in 1954], income inequality in the US was at a historical low. During a four decade [starting in the mid-1970's] decline in union membership, with union membership among wage and salaried workers at 10.7% in 2017 [according to Bureau of Labor Statistics data] the top 10% of income earners averaged more than 40 times more income than the other 90 percent of workers [Emmanuel Saez, UC Berkeley, 2015].

Pope Francis teaches that "(economic) inequality is the root of social ills." [The Joy of the Gospel, 202] Asserting that "concentration of wealth is quickly followed by outsized political clout, closing a circuit that only exacerbates economic inequities" (Aug 23, 2017), America magazine editor Kevin Clarke held

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from the President ...

LABOR DAY 2018: THE SOCIAL JUSTICE TEACHINGS IN ACTION

I think there is no time when the social justice teachings of the Catholic Church are more patently visible than when a local Catholic Teachers' Union is negotiating a Labor-Management Agreement.

Several of our locals were involved in collective bargaining during the 2017-2018 school year. Some made it through without a hitch; for others, it was down to the wire. One local's contract is still not resolved, but the teachers are holding firm while the employer tries to mess with duty-free lunch, the use of sick days and disability, not to mention the \$75 the teachers receive each year to provide decorations for their classrooms and other teaching aids.

Once a Union has a contract that provides for teachers and their families as well as job security, equitable treatment and due process, negotiations generally revolve around protecting these hard-won rights and benefits. Locals like the Cleveland High School and Academy Lay Teachers Association seemed to be able to work well with their counterparts in the diocesan office and came up with a mutually acceptable agreement before the end of the school year.

In Philadelphia, however, negotiations for the contract covering teachers in the 17 archdiocesan high schools concluded September 4 after a 24-hour marathon session. The teachers narrowly accepted the two-year Agreement.

The employer Church, in today's world, is, often, not the most pro-Union group, despite almost a century and a half of papal encyclicals

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Members of the NACST Executive Committee at the June Meeting said Goodbye and Thank You to outgoing Vice President-at- Large Barbara McVicker. from left Secretary-Treasurer Paul Fitzpatrick, Barbara McVicker, President Rita Schwartz, Vice President-At-Large Patricia Spellman and Executive Vice President Mike DeSantis

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Union Value

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that so called "right-to-work" legislation at the state and federal levels would only further widen the economic inequities in American society. The national legislation was introduced in February 2017 and referred to the House Education and Workforce Committee. Although it hasn't been moved out of that committee, it had received 128 cosponsors through August 3, 2018. In the 28 states with such legislation [which applies to public sector unions], union membership has plummeted [Malugade, January 2018].

Even though such legislation does not apply to private sector employers, the effect is the further erosion of all unions, public and private sector. In *Janus v. AFSCME* [June 2018], the US Supreme Court upheld a key provision of "right-to-work" legislation, i.e. that employees represented by public sector unions cannot be forced to pay representation fees, if employees choose not to join the union. Such legislation will certainly increase economic inequities and move the ideal of "justice for all" further out of reach.

From a micro perspective, unions are undoubtedly invaluable for the American Church. Holding the US bishops' teaching in *Economic Justice for All* [1986], the value of unions in Catholic institutions cannot be overestimated. From the dignity of work, through participation in the conditions in which someone works for the Church, unions put the ideals of Catholic social justice teaching into practice.

More specifically, Catholic school teacher unions exhibit an effective means for achieving the goals of the social justice teaching. Through their work in negotiating contracts, processing grievances, and working with school administrators, unions provide a voice for every classroom teacher.

As a pilgrim people, individual teachers, union leaders, and school administrators can and do work together to achieve social justice for all. Individual teachers, confident in their union leadership, will allow the leaders to work on their behalf. This should not, however, become a reason for complacency among union membership. Awareness of the value of negotiated contracts and the work of union officers is essential for the viability and effectiveness of Catholic school teacher unions.

Given the vagaries of the human condition, union leaders and school administrators will make mistakes in the labor-management relationship. Yet, directed by union members and the ideals of the Church's social justice teaching, Catholic school teacher unions can, and will, move American Catholic schools to a more complete implementation of Gospel values.

For both the macro and micro perspectives, there is reason to hope in the future of unions for American society and the American Catholic Church. In a Pew Research Center survey [conducted April/May 2018, published June 5, 2018], 55% of Americans have a favorable impression of unions, with 51% viewing the reduction of union representation in the last 20 years as "mostly bad." Further, among respondents ages 18 to 29, 68% hold a positive view of labor unions.

Clearly, it is the responsibility of current Catholic school teacher unions to provide opportunities for all teachers, and younger ones in particular, to participate in union activity. It is the responsibility of all teachers to avail themselves of those opportunities.

from the President ...

The Social Justice Teachings in Action [from p. 1]

and bishops’ pastorals championing the right of workers, including the right to organize and bargain. Unfortunately, the social activism of Pope Francis is often lost somewhere in translation as is the annual Labor Day Statement by the US Bishops.

I can only wonder what life is like for the thousands and thousands of teachers in Catholic elementary and secondary schools who work each day without the protection of a negotiated contract, who, as employees-at-will, have only the rights and benefits which their employers say they have.

As I wish all who labor in the educational vineyards of the Catholic Church a happy and productive school year, I also pray that those who hunger and thirst for social justice are successful in their quest.

Let the National Association of Catholic School Teachers help to make that happen.




The NACST Executive Committee offered its Appreciation to outgoing Vice President-At-Large George Rudolph. from left: President Rita Schwartz, George Rudolph and Executive Vice President Mike DeSantis

CATHOLIC TEACHER CONTRACTS EXCLUDED FROM U.S. SUPREME COURT DECISION ON AGENCY FEE

On June 27, 2018, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that public sector employees who choose not to become Union members are not required to pay a fair share Agency Fee. Nothing in the decision precludes employees who are non-members from becoming dues paying Union members or consenting to continue to pay a fee to the Union.

The key wording in the decision is “public sector employees”. This decision is not applicable to those of us in the private sector. That is the designation under which Catholic school teachers are listed.

The Janus Decision is short-sighted, anti-Union and totally ignores the fairness issue. The Labor-Management Agreement covers all members of the

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Affiliated Locals

Altoona Johnstown Catholic School Teachers Association
(Diocese of Altoona Johnstown PA)
Karen Blaisdell

Association of Catholic Teachers
(Archdiocese of Philadelphia PA)
Rita Schwartz

Catholic Teachers Union - NJ
(Diocese of Camden NJ)
Mary Kay Rossi

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

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

Greensburg Diocesan Teachers Association
(Diocese of Greensburg PA)
Will Merchant

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

St. Louis Archdiocesan Teachers Association
(Archdiocese of St. Louis MO)
Kathryn Williams-Heese

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

40th NACST Convention

The 40th NACST Convention will be held October 5-7, 2018 at the Hilton St. Louis Downtown at the Arch in St. Louis, MO.

The keynote speaker is NACST counsel, Martin Milz of Spear, Wilderman.

Reilly Scholarship Winners

Winners of the 2018 John J. Reilly Memorial Scholarships have been chosen from a field of 11 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 2018 Reilly Scholarship:

Sarah A Cooney,
daughter of ACT member Jennifer Cooney
Philadelphia

Grace F. Doerfler,
daughter of FPDT member Theresa Doerfler
Pittsburgh

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

Janus Decision

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bargaining unit – the people covered by the Contract. So, more than just Union members are included.

All members of the bargaining unit share in the benefits of the Contract, whether it is salary and benefits or Union representation in the event of disciplinary action or a grievance. The National Association of Catholic School Teachers has long taken the position that Catholic Teacher Unions must behave as if they are both morally and legally obligated to represent each teacher fairly, whether they are Union members or Agency Fee payers.

Paying one's fair share for the Union's work in negotiating the Contract and attending disciplinary meetings with teachers is a fairness issue. That is what Agency Fee is about. It is often referred to as the "No Free Riders Clause."

Agency Fee has been negotiated into many Catholic School Labor-Management Agreements. It is usually a condition of employment.

The U.S. Supreme Court Janus Decision has no effect on Catholic Teacher Union contracts that contain an Agency Fee Clause.