

Catholic School Teachers and Staff: *Why Unionize?*

Keep good teachers and support staff 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 and support staff with respect and professionalism

Catholic School Teachers and Staff: *How To Unionize?*

- by talking to your colleagues
- by becoming informed of locals in your area
- by contacting NACST:
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From the President ...

THE EMPLOYER CHURCH: 40 YEARS AFTER THE CATHOLIC BISHOP DECISION

March 21, 1979 – the day that would alter the rights of lay teachers as employees in Catholic elementary and secondary schools across the country. 40 years ago, the Supreme Court of the United States, in a 5-4 decision, ruled

In the absence of a clear expression by Congress of its intent to include lay teachers at church-operated schools within the scope of the NLRA, the NLRB lacks jurisdiction over religiously affiliated schools and the Court will decline to resolve the first amendment issues arising out of the exercise of such jurisdiction.

The National Labor Relations Board is the federal agency vested with the power to safeguard employees' rights to organize and to determine whether to have unions as their bargaining representative. The agency also acts to prevent and remedy unfair labor practices.

The Church argued against any kind of government involvement because of the separation of Church and State. Government involvement should not have been necessary given the abundance of Catholic social teaching documents, including Canon Law, encyclicals and pastorals.

Truthfully, Catholic Teacher Unions did not even approach the NLRB until they had petitioned their Bishops for recognition and collective bargaining. The employer Church with, at that time, almost a century of championing the rights of workers, refused to treat their employees the way they exhorted all other employers to treat theirs.

Organizing continued in Catholic elementary and secondary schools and there were, indeed, successes, but only when a bishop actually followed the teachings of the Church or when a Union prevailed in the courts.

Union organizing campaigns continue today with lay teachers listed as almost 98% of the teaching force. The issues are the same: teachers want a say over the conditions under which they work; they want a salary that will support themselves and their families; they want due process and a procedure to resolve disputes.

It is unfortunate that the employer Church needs to be so often reminded that there is not one rule for everyone else and another for the Church.

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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 US Bishops

Catholic social teaching supports the right of workers to choose whether to organize, join a union, and bargain collectively, and to exercise these rights without reprisal...

Workers, owners, employers, and unions should work together to create decent jobs, build a more just economy, and advance the common good.

Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, USCCB, 2007

2018-2019 NACST Lay Teacher Salary Survey

	Basic BA/BS Scale			Scale with MA/Equivalent		Top Salary			Tuition charged		Comments
	Starting	Maximum	# steps to max	Starting	Maximum	Beyond MA	# credits or degree	# steps to top salary	elementary	secondary	
Belleville, IL diocesan elementary schools	27620	44710	30	31606	49094	49594	MA+15	30	3400-4100	7500-9000	1
Boston, MA parish elementary schools	25000-45000	38000-72000	Varies	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3150-17250	n/a	2
Worcester, MA dioc elem & secondary schools	35882	63830	19	38382	66330	67830	MA+30	19	4900-7300	7850-9100	1,4
Kalamazoo, MI dioc/parish elem & sec schools	20212-30444	29275-44143	10-25	22907-32271	31078-54021	54492	MA+18	32	900-7390	1930-10534	2
St. Louis, MO diocesan secondary schools	29700	52998	42	31000	73929	76248	PhD/EqD	42	n/a	8033-11125	1,4
Las Vegas, NV dioc elem & secondary schools	35000-45000	50000	8	45000-48000	56000		MA+30	8	5000-6000	12000	2
Camden, NJ diocesan secondary schools	30454-40280	63982-78871	41-46	32080-42695	33707-81286	83701	2MA or PhD	46	n/a	8950-10370	2,4
Metuchen, NJ dioc/parish elem & sec schools	30687	44705	20	32988	48058	49176	PhD	20	4550-7250	13900-26000	1
Buffalo, NY ind/parish elementary schools	27601	33531	20	28488	34408	n/a	n/a	n/a	Varies	n/a	3,4
Buffalo, NY diocesan secondary schools	27564	60585	27	Step + 1500	62085	66588	MA+30 or PhD	n/a	n/a	9156	3,4
Ogdensburg, NY dioc/parish schools	23000-34500	37830	Varies	23000-35000	37628	n/a	n/a	n/a	2000-3900	5100-5300	2
Syracuse, NY dioc/par elem & sec schools	28110-30725	78607-80492	Varies	29610-32225	80107-81992	82307-84192	PhD	65	3900-5250	5715-7475	2
Cleveland, OH diocesan secondary schools	34620	54989	40	36995	67040	69227	PhD	40	n/a	8600-10500	1,4
Oklahoma City, OK dioc/par elem & sec schools	32156	39000	20	34185	67000		MA+30 or PhD	20	2400-4750	8600-9600	3
Greensburg, PA diocesan secondary schools	27400	68156	40	28200	68956	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5500-9600	1,4
Philadelphia, PA diocesan secondary schools	40000	80265	44	40500	81065	81705	PhD /EqD	44	n/a	7800	1,4
Rapid City, SD dioc elem & secondary schools	31313	36914	11	33800	46238	50474	MA+30	22	3792-6236	6106-7756	1
El Paso, TX par/private elem & sec schools	23336-37600	24600-47150	21	31500	48820	n/a	n/a	n/a	3400-5814	4265-7850	2
Superior, WI parochial elementary schools	25630	38765		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1800-3300	n/a	1

Comments

1 - There is one salary scale that is standard for the school (s) being reported. 2 - 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. 3 - Salaries vary from school to school; therefore, numbers reflect the average of all schools being reported. 4 - *A National Association of Catholic School Teachers Affiliate*

Employees At Will

In legal terms an "employee at will" is any worker who is not part of a working unit represented by a collective bargaining agent, i.e. a union.

In the forty years since the US Supreme Court's *Chicago Bishops* decision, thousands of Catholic school teachers have been represented by unions they themselves have chosen, even without the legal protections guaranteed by the National Labor Relations Act. Representation begins with the election of a bargaining agent independent of the employer Church. The union then negotiates contracts with the diocesan and/or school administrations.

The bargaining process puts the Church's social justice teaching into practice. A cornerstone of the process is the personal satisfaction accompanying the accomplishment of our educational mission without a concomitant anxiety about our ability to continue the mission.

Teachers working under negotiated contracts have that essential aspect of working to fulfill our mission - job security. Such is not the case with employees at will. Often enough, for employees at will, terminations have been based on the changing whims and personal quirks of school administrators. While it would be nice to think that all members of the Church follow the moral imperatives associated with the dignity of the worker, experience has shown that, even as the Church actively promotes the rights of workers, individual bishops, pastors, and principals act contrary to those same moral principles.

Without the protection of unions and negotiated contracts with job security, teachers remain merely employees at will. At this time in the American Church, NACST urges all Catholic school teachers to put into practice the Church's social justice teaching. To all employees at will in Catholic schools: use NACST to protect and promote your rights.

Contact NACST today.

NACST Convention/Conference

October 11-13, 2019 Buffalo, NY

Keynote Speaker **Dr. Charles Russo**

University of Dayton PhD Program in Educational Leadership

The NLRB v. Catholic Bishops of Chicago [1979]

Affiliated Locals

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(Diocese of Altoona Johnstown PA)

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