

# Catholic Scholars for Worker Justice

---

*Promoting Catholic Social Teaching on the Indispensable Role of Unions for Every Profession*

THE LABOR GUILD, 85 COMMERCIAL STREET, WEYMOUTH, MASSACHUSETTS 02118 USA  
Phone +1 (781) 340.7887 Fax +1 (781) 340.5885 Email: [info@catholicsscholarsforworkerjustice.org](mailto:info@catholicsscholarsforworkerjustice.org)  
Website: [www.catholicsscholarsforworkerjustice.org](http://www.catholicsscholarsforworkerjustice.org)

## Statement of Support for Service Workers at Catholic Colleges and Universities Labor Day, 2010

Catholic Scholars for Worker Justice is an international association of scholars who are committed to Catholic Social Teaching on workers' rights. We were founded to proclaim the Church's extremely welcoming attitude to unions in the workplace and to support workers in both Catholic and secular workplaces who seek to form unions.

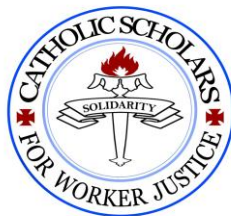
*Catholic Scholars for Worker Justice is pleased to issue a Statement of Support for service workers at Catholic colleges and universities in the United States and Canada. We urge service workers to form unions to bargain collectively for fair wages, job security, health and retirement benefits and other improvements to the workplace that befit their dignity as human beings and creatures of God. We call upon the Trustees and administrators at Catholic colleges and universities to support their employees—as direct or indirect employers--as the workers assert the right to free association that is rooted in the natural moral law and that serves as the cornerstone of Catholic Social Teaching on workers' rights.*

Support for labor unions enjoys a long history in the Catholic Church. Beginning in the medieval period and especially since the publication of Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891), the Church has given exceptional support for labor unions and the Popes—from Leo to Benedict XVI—have *encouraged* workers to form unions. The official teaching of the Catholic Church as found in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (2004) holds that labor unions exert a “positive influence for social order and solidarity, and are therefore an *indispensable element of social life*. (#305) The Church further teaches that, “*The Magisterium recognizes the fundamental role played by labor unions to defend the vital interests of workers employed in the various professions.*” (#305) [For a complete understanding of Catholic teaching on labor unions see the Chapter 6 of the *Compendium*, “On Human Work” pp. 115-140. See also CSWJ's Foundational Statement that is posted on our website.] In addition, in 1986 the Catholic Bishops of the United States stated: “The Church fully supports the right of workers to form unions or other associations to secure their rights to fair wages and working conditions...No one may deny the right to organize without attacking human dignity itself. (*Economic Justice for All*, 1986, #104)

Unfortunately, Catholic Scholars for Worker Justice has encountered all too many Catholic institutions that choose to respond to an organizing drive by immediately seeking recourse to the civil law or to outside “union avoidance” specialists in order to neutralize, or to delay, or to discourage workers from forming a union. *In Catholic teaching the civil law only has legitimacy if it is rooted in the natural moral law*. Hence, we urge the trustees and administrators at Catholic colleges and universities in the United States to consult the natural moral law that is found in Catholic Social Teaching as a *first course of action* in this matter.

We call upon all stakeholders at Catholic institutions—students, parents, faculty, administrators, trustees, and vendors--to support service workers as they challenge all of us to fulfill the words of Jesus in Matthew 25:

**“Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of these the least of my family, you did it to me.”**



***The following members and colleagues of Catholic Scholars for Worker Justice support this statement on behalf of service workers at Catholic Colleges and Universities:***

Institutions for identification purposes only

**Joseph J. Fahey, Ph.D.  
Manhattan College  
Chair, Catholic Scholars for Worker Justice**

**Joe Holland, Ph.D.  
St. Thomas University  
Vice-Chair, Catholic Scholars for Worker Justice**

**Mary Priniski, O.P., Ph.D.  
Vice-Chair, Catholic Scholars for Worker Justice**

**Patrick Sullivan, C.S.C., Ph.D.  
The Labor Guild  
Executive Secretary, Catholic Scholars for Worker Justice**

**Louise Akers, S.C., Ph.D.  
Office of Peace, Justice & Integrity of Creation**

**Jerome Baggett, Ph.D.  
University of Santa Clara**

**Raymond Decker, Ph.D.  
Retired, Archdiocese of San Francisco**

**David Gregory, J.D., Ph.D.  
St. John's University School of Law**

**James A. Gross, Ph.D.  
Cornell University**

**Brian Jordan, O.F.M., D. Min.  
Labor Priest**

**Father Thomas Massaro, S.J., Ph.D.  
Boston College**

**Joseph McCartin, Ph.D.  
Georgetown University**

**Sharon McGuire, O.P., Ph.D.  
Siena Heights University**

**David O'Brien, Ph.D.  
University of Dayton**

**John O'Brien, C.P., Ph.D.  
Blessed John XXIII National Seminary**

**Jeannette Rodriguez, Ph.D.**  
**Seattle University**

**Les Schmidt, M.A.**  
**Labor Priest**

**Terrence Tilley, Ph.D.**  
**Fordham University**

**John Trumbour, Ph.D.**  
**Harvard Law School**

**Martin Wolfson, Ph.D.**  
**University of Notre Dame**

**William Quigley, J.D.**  
**Loyola University of New Orleans**  
**College of Law**