



THE

The Newspaper of Local 1776
The Association of Catholic Teachers

SPIRIT '76 OF

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From The President's Desk

THE PAPAL VISIT

Unless you have been in an extremely remote section of the world or in a coma for the past few months, you know that, starting on September 26, His Holiness, Pope Francis, will be spending the weekend in Philadelphia. How millions of people will get to see him is a mystery that keeps unfolding each day in the media.

Only those chosen few will get up close and personal. Archdiocesan teachers and their Union will not be in that group. Nowhere are Catholic teachers mentioned among the categories of ticketed attendees.

In April, I wrote to Pope Francis. He had, recently, spoken with the members of the Italian Catholic Union of School Teachers and he had some amazing comments for them.

Dear gentlemen and lady colleagues,

Allow me to call you thus, because like you, I also was a teacher and I have a lovely memory of the days spent in the classroom with students.

Teaching is a very beautiful work. It's too bad that teachers are poorly paid, because it's not only the time they spend in the school. They must prepare themselves, they must think of each one of the pupils: how to help them to go forward. Isn't it so? It's an injustice.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT . . .

I sent my letter through the Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Vigano, the Pope's Ambassador in Washington. I told Pope Francis that it is reassuring to know that you recognize the great responsibility that teachers have and that this is not reflected in the amount of pay they receive. This is, especially, true in the United States where, unlike most of the other developed countries of the world, there is no government money to fund Catholic schools or Catholic teachers' salaries. As we all know, our teachers' love for their students and their vocations as teachers cannot be measured merely in money.

The formation of Catholic teacher associations and unions over the past fifty years and the recognition of these organizations by the Church for purposes of collective bargaining have furthered the teaching vocation. The motto of our National Association is "Justice and Dignity for Catholic School Teachers," qualities which, each day, we strive both to obtain and to maintain, while living our Catholic faith and supporting the mission of Catholic education.

Our teachers are looking forward to your visit to Philadelphia in September. During your limited time in the City of Brotherly Love, I hope your schedule will allow me the opportunity to meet you so that I can bring you greetings and best wishes from the thousands of Catholic school teacher members of the National Association of Catholic School Teachers and the Association of Catholic Teachers, Philadelphia.

When, by mid-July, I had heard nothing, I again wrote to Archbishop Vigano and asked the status of my letter.

On July 29, I received a letter from Archbishop Chaput.

Archbishop Vigano has asked me to respond to your letters regarding your desire to greet the Holy Father on behalf of the Catholic school teachers that you represent here in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

Rita, such a greeting is not possible. The Holy Father has a very limited amount of time in Philadelphia, less than 48 hours, and that time is already taken by a very full agenda.

I hope that many of the teachers are able to join the Holy Father for the Festival of Families and the Sunday afternoon Mass. As you know, everyone is welcome and the teachers have been especially invited to volunteer their services to welcome all our guests from around the world.

Happy New School Year, everyone. See you at the next General Membership Meeting.



2015-2016 Labor-Management Agreement

The 2015-2016 Labor-Management Agreement was signed on September 9, 2015. It went into effect on September 1st. The Contract with all Exhibits and Appendices will be posted on the ACT web site, act1776.com, in the next few weeks.



Secretary for Catholic Education, Christopher Mominey, and ACT President, Rita C. Schwartz signing the 2015-2016 Labor-Management Agreement.

IMPORTANT MEDICAL INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS CURRENTLY ON PERSONAL CHOICE

As of November 1, 2015, there will be an annual deductible on certain services provided under Personal Choice. The annual deductible will be \$100 per individual or \$200 per family. The services that will be affected by the deductible are Laboratory/Pathology, Chemo/Radiation/Dialysis, Outpatient Private Duty Nursing, Skilled Nursing Facility, Hospice, and Home Health Care. (Services that require a copay are not subject to the deductible.)

If you or any of your family members are in need of blood work, plan to have it drawn prior to November 1, 2015 to avoid having to meet the \$100/\$200 deductible.

VERY IMPORTANT!

Representation May Be Crucial

Article III, Section 2 of the Labor-Management Agreement is short but extremely important. Please pay particularly close attention to what it has to say.

No teacher may be asked to attend a meeting with the school or diocesan administration without a representative of the Association being present if the teacher reasonably feels the meeting could result in disciplinary action against him/her.

Disciplinary action cannot be taken against any teacher unless the teacher has been apprised in writing of his/her right to union representation.

Should you “reasonably feel” the meeting could turn into one that involves you in disciplinary action, immediately get to your Senior Delegate for advice or call the ACT Office if you choose. Don’t let a relatively minor situation turn into a major one because you decided you could “handle” it yourself.

Education Grant Application Due

Teachers who wish to apply for an Education/Study Grant under the Labor-Management Agreement (Art. XIII, Sec. 7) must do so by October 15th. The grant offers 50 percent tuition reimbursement up to a maximum of \$2000 per year for undergraduate coursework, \$2200 for Master's Degree coursework, and \$2500 for Doctoral coursework. The grant can also be used as reimbursement for successfully passing the Praxis Series exams in a teacher's area of certification. Teachers who have received a study grant for two (2) consecutive years are not eligible to receive for the following year.

Grants are awarded on the basis of system seniority and are available to any teacher with at least one year of teaching in the System.

Forms to apply for an Education/Study Grant are posted at the local school or can be downloaded from the home page of the ACT web site at www.act1776.com.

Additional credits?

If you have received an advanced degree or additional credits over the summer which qualifies you for payment under a different column of the salary scale, notify your school accountant immediately.

You must also send proof (an original transcript) of the degree/credits to Mr. James Molnar at the Office of Catholic Education so that the change in degree/credits can be verified.

For your records, it is highly recommended that all documents be sent via certified mail, return receipt requested.

The five lanes of the salary scale are:

Bachelor's Degree
Bachelor's + 18 or Certification
Master's or 30 Graduate Credits
Double Master's
Doctorate

Rest in Peace, John!



Mr. John Jenkins was a part of the West Catholic Prep family for over a decade. In the spring of 2005, John arrived at West Prep and assumed the responsibility of teaching English to juniors and seniors. Facing the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortunes" did not deter John from completing his task. As the school year ended John pulled his eighth period through Orwell's **1984** with courage and determination. His second foray into the classroom occurred the next year when John moved from literature to writing. Being hired as our Principles of Writing teacher assured this young and eager teacher a secure place on the faculty. As his teaching career advanced, John presented himself as a strong father figure to our student body. He instilled mature virtues of responsibility and integrity to his classes. Since the writing class was given on the ninth grade level, most of the incoming freshmen had a strong relationship with John that, for some, lasted until they graduated. In John's next venue on the West Catholic Prep faculty, this young teacher became a young Director of Admissions for our school. Here John blossomed as he dealt daily not only with students but also with their parents. Since John is a father of two beautiful daughters, his connection with our West Catholic Prep parents was deep and true. As the Admissions Director, John would reach out with both academic and financial aid to as many families as possible. He would always try to offer this assistance with a calm and self-effacing demeanor. One transfer student was recipient of John's personal largesse. This upper classman received not only financial aid but also a school uniform purchased by Mr. Jenkins.

John will be deeply missed by the West Catholic Prep family. From his time in the classroom to his days and nights in the Admissions Office, his upbeat and strong personality will linger in our halls for years to come. God bless you, John, and now rest in peace with our heavenly Father. Thank you.

Sr. Ave Armstrong, SSJ

English Department Head

*2015 Association of Catholic Teachers
John J. Reilly
\$500.00 Scholarship Awards*

The 9th Grade Scholar at Archbishop Wood is
Samantha Link,
not Julie Montague as previously listed.

Congratulations, Samantha!

**UNION DUES
2015-2016**

\$550.20
\$26.20 per pay
beginning with the pay of September 18, 2015
and ending with the pay of June 24, 2016

Lancer's Local

Issues or contractual items of interest to
Holy Cross Academy (Delran, NJ)

Union Dues
2015-2016

\$534.10

(\$53.41 per month from September, 2015
through June, 2016)



More Notes of Thanks!

From: John J. Reilly Scholarship Award Winners

“Each year, the Association’s Executive Board awards a \$500 Scholarship to the 9th grader in each Archdiocesan high school and at Holy Cross Academy, Delran, New Jersey who has the highest general average as of the end of the first semester. If that student is already on scholarship, it is given to the highest student not receiving financial assistance. The \$500 Scholarship is sent to each school to be applied to the student’s 10th grade tuition.”

Dear Ms. Schwartz,

On behalf of the students of Archbishop Ryan High School, thank you for your gift of \$500.0 for the Association of Catholic Teachers for Alyssa Sliwa. Through your support, Archbishop Ryan continues its mission of supporting the school community in its pursuit of educational excellence.

Archbishop Ryan High School, a Catholic, coeducational school, is committed to empowering students to become contributing members of our Church and society. In partnership with family and community, the faculty strives to teach as Jesus did by providing spiritual, social, and service opportunities for growth. Through a comprehensive academic curriculum, the faculty challenges students to become well-rounded, life-long learners.

Again, thank you for your support of Archbishop Ryan High School.

Sincerely,

Keith Czarny '07

Director of Development and Communications
Archbishop Ryan High School

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Dear Rita,

Thank you for the \$500 tuition check for Thomas Beudet. Thomas is an impressive student. In grade nine, he achieved first honors in a roster of all honors classes. I expect the same high level of achievement in his grade ten honors classes.

The cost of tuition is a challenge for the majority of Judge Families. Parents make many sacrifices, and it is good to see a positive return on their investment. I appreciate the financial assistance the Association of Catholic Teachers provides.

We look forward to the 2015-2016 school year, as partners in Catholic education.

Sincerely,

Rev. James E. Dalton, OSFS

Principal
Father Judge High School

Dear Rita and ACT Members,

Thank you for your scholarship to Brianna Parise. I know your help with her tuition is appreciated by the Parise Family. Please know I value our partnership and look forward to working together.

Gratefully,

Dennis

Dennis Guida
President/Principal
Holy Cross Academy

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Dear Rita:

I am writing to express our deepest thanks for your donation of \$500.00 to John W. Hallahan Catholic Girls' High School from your organization to be applied to tuition for Danielle Skrocki. Generous gifts from the Association of Catholic Teachers provide the financial and moral support needed to continue our mission of educating young women with **Faith, Purpose, and Vision**.

There is no way to fully express our gratitude for your loyalty and support. We are continually inspired by the generosity of your membership. Our **very big thanks** for your generosity and we look forward to a continuing partnership with you.

Gratefully yours,

Denise

Denise Kassekert
President

INFORMATION AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Did you know that you can logon to Independence Blue Cross web site at www.ibxpress.com and get all kinds of information at your fingertips? You can make sure all your family members are active on your policy, you can order identification cards for them and/or print temporary ID cards, you can check recent and past claims, find a provider, view the details of your benefits, and so much more.

In the same way, you can logon to the United Concordia web site at www.ucci.com and check the status of dental claims, find a provider, order a dental card, etc.

You will have to create a username and password at each of these websites in order to view your personal information

IMPORTANT UPDATES

OFFICE HOURS: Beginning Tuesday, September 8, 2015 the ACT Office hours of operation will be Monday through Friday, 9:00 to 4:30.

ADDRESS CHANGES -- If you are in the process of moving, or have already moved to a new address, don't forget to call or email the ACT Office with your new address and phone number. You can also visit the ACT Webpage and log-on to your personal page to update your information.

IF YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS HAS CHANGED, PLEASE NOTIFY THE ACT OFFICE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

FREEDOM CREDIT UNION – The Freedom Credit Union offers teachers and their families a wide range of financial opportunities. For more information visit the credit union's website at www.freedomcu.org. The phone number for the Freedom Credit Union is 215-612-5900.

MOVIE TICKETS – The ACT Office keeps a limited supply of movie tickets on hand for teachers to purchase at a discounted rate. We have REGAL/UNITED ARTISTS and AMC Tickets Available. AMC Tickets cost \$8.00 per ticket. Regal Tickets are now \$8.50 per ticket. If you are interested in purchasing tickets, please send a check payable to the Association of Catholic Teachers with your request. Please enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope with your request.

CONTACT US AT
ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC TEACHERS, 1700 SANSOM STREET – SUITE 903,
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19103, 215-568-4175
www.act1776.com or nacst.nacst@verizon.net

ACT School Visit Schedule 2015-2016 School Year

NAME OF SCHOOL	ACT VISITOR	DATE	DAY
Bonner-Prendergast	Rita	January 12	Tuesday
Carroll	Irene	November 4	Wednesday
Conwell-Egan	Irene	November 18	Wednesday
Hallahan	Irene	January 13	Wednesday
Holy Cross	Irene	December 2	Wednesday
St. Hubert	Rita	February 2	Tuesday
Fr. Judge	Irene	January 20	Wednesday
Lansdale	Rita	November 10	Tuesday
Little Flower	Rita	February 16	Tuesday
McDevitt	Irene	February 17	Wednesday
Neumann-Goretti	Rita & Irene	October 21 March 16	Wednesday Wednesday
O'Hara	Rita & Irene	December 15	Tuesday
Pope John Paul II	Rita & Irene	October 27	Tuesday
Roman	Irene	February 24	Wednesday
Ryan	Rita & Irene	March 8	Tuesday
Shanahan	Irene	November 11	Wednesday
West Catholic	Irene	March 2	Wednesday
Wood	Rita	February 23	Tuesday