

Wisconsin: The bishops' silence was deafening

Maureen Fiedler | Jun. 11, 2012 NCR Today

Where are Monsignors George Higgins and John Egan when we need them? They were among the great "labor priests" of the 20th century, men who spent much of their lives defending the rights of working people and the central role of unions in the struggle for economic justice in this country.

Union rights were at the center of the recall election in Wisconsin last week because Gov. Scott Walker -- the focus of the recall effort -- had moved to deny collective bargaining rights to public sector unions in that state. But the silence of the Wisconsin bishops was deafening. Maybe someone in the Wisconsin hierarchy said something about the rights of working people, or the denial of collective bargaining, but if so, he whispered his thoughts.

It was actually the nuns who were at the forefront of issues of those union issues, standing for economic justice. (Not a surprise these days!) According to *Badger Catholic*, 392 nuns signed the petition for Scott Walker's recall as governor. They included nuns in leadership of their respective orders or in prominent positions at universities.

Labor rights are an issue the Catholic church needs to revisit and find its voice anew on. Economic justice today demands no less. Yet another reason to look to nuns for Catholic leadership.

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