

The IAF Project

The IAF Project is an effort to have area churches contract with the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) to train churchgoers in community organizing. The putative goal of the organized communities is to create political power for the “poor and marginalized.” The IAF asks for a three-year commitment to the IAF training and annual dues of \$1,500 to \$7,500. The IAF is allowed to use church facilities for soliciting targeted parishioners to train and to hold meetings. The IAF training is based on the principles articulated by Saul Alinsky, a Chicago neo-Marxist who founded IAF. Alinsky explained these principles in RULES FOR RADICALS (hereafter “Rules”).

The IAF project is -- on many levels -- contrary to the teachings of Jesus Christ and His Church including the following:

- **Political Action** – The Church is not a political organization nor one whose purpose is to train parishioners in organizing political activity. “It is not the role of the Pastors of the Church to intervene directly in the political structuring and organization of social life. This task is part of the vocation of the lay faithful, acting on their own initiative with their fellow citizens. Social action can assume various concrete forms. It should always have the common good in view and be in conformity with the message of the Gospel and the teaching of the Church. It is the role of the laity “to animate temporal realities with Christian commitment, by which they show that they are witnesses and agents of peace and justice.” CCC #2442. Without Church involvement, parishioners can join existing political communities such as the Democratic Party or ACORN, another Alinsky-inspired group, or join together for some particular political purpose. They do not need Church funding, facilities or sponsorship to do so.
- **False Premise** – The IAF Project is based on a false premise, to-wit: that the “poor and marginalized” need is for political power. The Church teaches that we all need Christ, not political power. CCC #389. The Church wants to change hearts not “manufacture” political power for change.
- **Theological Distortions** – The IAF is promoted as if community organizing for political power is fulfilling the Church’s teaching that Christians are priest, prophet and king because to be a prophet is to “confront power.” A prophet may confront “power” but such confrontations are incidental to the prophet’s chief function which is to be God’s messenger. Even when a prophet confronts power, it is God’s message that confronts the powerful not an organized political force. See, e.g., John the Baptist, Nathan (2 Samuel 12).
- **Liberation Theology** – The idea of training parishioners to be community organizers of political power is akin to the Liberation Theology that arose in South America and has been soundly condemned by the Church. See, e.g., Cardinal Ratzinger who said “An analysis of the phenomenon of liberation theology reveals that it constitutes a fundamental threat to the faith of the Church.”
- **Misuse of Parish Name** – When the organized communities begin their political activity, they will be identified with St John the Baptist Catholic Church and by any other parish sponsor even though the parish itself has not endorsed the political agitations initiated by the community organizations.

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In addition, the IAF training and the IAF reputation indicate a decidedly different agenda than actually helping the “poor and marginalized”.

- **Protégés** – The most famous community organizer trained by the IAF is Barack Obama who is pursuing the most pro-abortion agenda in the history of this country. The unborn are the most marginalized persons in America today.
- **Means** – Alinsky teaches that political power is to be obtained by whatever works; that the end (political power) justifies whatever means are used. Rules at 24-47. The Church teaches that the ends do not justify the means. CCC #1887.
- **Relations** – The IAF project is being funded through the Sponsoring Committee, Inc., a corporation created by Catholic Charities Advocacy Attorney. It has acquired its 501 (c)(3) status by affiliating with the Communities Foundation of Oklahoma which has endowed the Women’s Foundation of Oklahoma who gives grants to fund Planned Parenthood.
- **Agenda** – Though the IAF claims that the trained organizers set their own agenda and that it is non-partisan, the reality is that the IAF-trained community organizers have a consistent record of supporting leftist causes that ultimately seek a political kingdom not the Kingdom of God. The IAF claims it “succeeds because its leaders have learned how to manufacture and manage power.” (underline added) In addition, it has affiliated with the effort by Call to Action and other groups to force radical changes in Church doctrine.

In discussing the third temptation of Christ, the Pope has noted that the “fusion of faith and political power always comes at a price; faith becomes the servant of power and must bend to its criteria. * * *. the concept of the Messiah * * * means not worldly power but the Cross * * *.” JESUS OF NAZARETH, 40-42.

‘The Church cannot and must not take upon herself the political battle to bring about the most just society possible. * * *

“Christian charitable activity must be independent of parties and ideologies. It is not a means of changing the world ideologically, and it is not at the service of worldly stratagems, but it is a way of making present here and now the love which man always needs. The modern age, particularly from the nineteenth century on, has been dominated by various versions of a philosophy of progress whose most radical form is Marxism. Part of Marxist strategy is the theory of impoverishment: in a situation of unjust power, it is claimed, anyone who engages in charitable initiatives is actually serving that unjust system, making it appear at least to some extent tolerable. This in turn slows down a potential revolution and thus blocks the struggle for a better world. Seen in this way, charity is rejected and attacked as a means of preserving the status quo. What we have here, though, is really an inhuman philosophy. * * * We contribute to a better world only by personally doing good now, with full commitment and wherever we have the opportunity, independently of partisan strategies and programmes.”

DEUS CARITAS EST OF THE SUPREME PONTIFF BENEDICT XVI