

Labor Day and The Dignity of Work

Introduction

Let us begin our prayer by recalling the words of Cesar Chavez: "Every time we sit at a table at night or in the morning to enjoy the fruits and grain and vegetables from our good earth, remember that they come from the work of men and women and children who have been exploited for generations."

Too often we don't pay attention, we don't stop to think that, even in this day and age, injustice remains an invisible ingredient in much of the food that we eat.

Jesus, shake us awake, open our eyes to see our power and obligation as consumers to help put things right. Justice demands it. Love demands it.

Song: "Whatever You Do"

Reading 1: Beatitudes of the Farm Worker

I was hungry, and you said, we only deal with problems in the city, not in the rural areas.

I was imprisoned, and you said you were sorry but there was nothing you could do. I was naked, and you looked the other way as you passed me by in your expensive three-piece suit.

I was sick with pesticide poisoning, and you never thought of the human cost in the vegetables on our table.

I was homeless, a migrant sleeping in my old car with my family of six, and you refused to see how your board members could make a difference.

I was grieving over my children, who never had a chance to get an education, and you said "Too bad" and continued with business as usual.

Whatever you do to the least of My people, make no mistake, you do it to Me.

Song: "Lord, When You Came" verses by cantors,



Photo 194256383 | Farm Labor © Randy Fletcher | Dreamstime.com

refrain sung by all (Music on next page)

Reading 2: From "Loaves and Fishes" by Dorothy Day

Young people say, "What good can one person do? What is the sense of our small effort?" They cannot see that we must lay one brick at a time, take one step at a time; we can be responsible only for the one action of the present moment. But we can beg for an increase of love in our hearts that will vitalize and transform all our individual actions, and know that God will take them and multiply them, as Jesus multiplied the loaves and fishes.

The greatest challenge of the day is how to bring about a revolution of the heart, a revolution which has to start with each one of us. When we begin to

WHATSOEVER YOU DO

Willard F. Jabusch

Refrain

What-so - ev - er you do to the least of my peo - ple, that you

Verses

do un - to me.

1. When I was hun - gry, you gave me to
2. When I was home-less, you o - pened your
3. When I was wea - ry, you helped me find
4. When in a pris - on, you came to my
5. When I was laughed at, you stood by my

1. eat;
2. door;
3. rest;
4. cell;
5. side;

When I was thirst - y, you gave me to drink.
 When I was na - ked, you gave me your coat.
 When I was anx - ious, you calmed all my fears.
 When on a sick - bed, you cared for my needs.
 When I was hap - py, you shared in my joy.

to Refrain

1-5. Now en - ter in - to the home of my Fa - ther.

take the lowest place, to wash the feet of others, to love our brothers and sisters with that burning love, that passion, which led to the Cross, then we can truly say, "Now I have begun."

Silence 5 minutes

Chime

Petitions

After each intercession, please sing the response: O God, Hear us; hear our prayer.

1. For the Church, when she cries out in the name of justice and mercy, we pray:

2. For world leaders, that they heed the cries of those who cry out for justice and mercy; we pray:

3. For our community, that a spirit of service to others is our foundation, we pray:

4. For all the workers in the world, especially those who do grueling work in mines and factories, we pray:

5. For those who are exploited through "undocumented work" or are the "victims of labor," who are injured or die on the job because of unsafe working conditions, we pray.

6. For those who are without work and who return home every day, unsuccessful in their efforts to "earn their bread," we pray:

Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master,

Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console,

to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Song: "Lord of All Hopefulness" (music and

Lord, When You Came / Pescador de Hombres

Verses



1. Lord, when you came to the sea - shore
 2. Lord, you knew what my boat car - ried:
 3. Lord, have you need of my la - bor,
 4. Lord, send me where you would have me,



You weren't seek - ing the wise or the wealth - y,
 Nei - ther mon - ey nor weap - ons for fight - ing,
 Hands for serv - ice, a heart made for lov - ing,
 To a vil - lage, or heart of the cit - y;



But on - ly ask - ing that I might fol - low,
 But nets for fish - ing, my dai - ly la - bor.
 My arms for lift - ing the poor and bro - ken?
 I will re - mem - ber that you are with me.

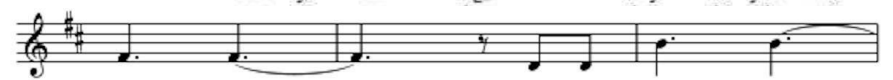
Refrain



O Lord, in my eyes you were gaz - ing,



Kind - ly smil - ing, my name you were



say - ing; All I treas - ured,



I have left on the sand there; Close to



you, I will find oth - er seas.

O GOD, HEAR US

Bob Hurd

*Refrain



O God, hear us; hear our prayer.

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words on the next page.)

Closing Prayer

God of goodness, you give us the land to provide us with food. Hear the prayers of Your people and give all who work on that land a full measure of human dignity and justice.

May we bring the spirit of Christ to all our efforts,

LORD OF ALL HOPEFULNESS

SLANE



1. Lord of all hope-ful-ness, Lord of all joy, Whose
 2. Lord of all ea-ger-ness, Lord of all faith, Whose
 3. Lord of all kind-li-ness, Lord of all grace, Your
 4. Lord of all gen-tle-ness, Lord of all calm, Whose



1. trust, ev-er child-like, no cares can de-stroy, Be
 2. strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe, Be
 3. hands swift to wel-come, your arms to em-brace, Be
 4. voice is con-tent-ment, whose pres-ence is balm, Be



1. there at our wak-ing, and give us, we pray, Your
 2. there at our la-bors, and give us, we pray, Your
 3. there at our hom-ing, and give us, we pray, Your
 4. there at our sleep-ing, and give us, we pray, Your



1. bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.
 2. strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of the day.
 3. love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.
 4. peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.

Text: 10 11 11 12; 'Lord of all hopefulness', words by Jan Struther, 1901-1953; fr. Enlarged Songs of Praise, 1931.
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 Music: Trad. Irish melody; adapt. fr. The Church Hymnary, 1927.

and may these efforts yield a rich harvest of justice, peace, and love. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, the Lord. Amen.

Closing Song "They'll Know We Are Christians"

Thank you for coming tonight.
 Please us again on October 5.

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They'll Know We Are Christians



1. We are one in the Spir-it, we are
 2. We will walk with each oth-er, we will
 3. We will work with each oth-er, we will
 4. All praise to the Fa-ther, from



one in the Lord, We are one in the
 walk hand in hand, We will walk with each
 work side by side, We will work with each
 whom all things come, And all praise to Christ



Spir-it, we are one in the Lord, And we
 oth-er, we will walk hand in hand, And to-
 oth-er, we will work side by side, And we'll
 Je-sus, his on-ly Son, And all



pray that all u-ni-ty may one day be re-stored:
 geth-er we'll spread the news that God is in our land:
 guard hu-man's dig-ni-ty and save hu-man's pride:
 praise to the Spir-it, who makes us one:

Pope Francis on St. Joseph the Worker

Pope Francis gave a series of catechetical talks focused on St. Joseph in 2022. St. Joseph as a carpenter, he said, serves as an example of the dignity of work that today is often denied to those in need.

“Many young people, many fathers and mothers experience the ordeal of not having a job that allows them to live peacefully; they just live day by day. And how often the search for work becomes so desperate that it drives them to the point of losing all hope and the desire to live,” the pope said.

The value of work, he added, is also exploited in today’s world where many people, including undocumented workers, are forced to do grueling tasks for unfair wages, and children, “who should be playing,” instead are “forced to work like an adult.”

“They are our brothers and sisters, those who earn their living this way, with jobs that do not recognize their dignity. Let us think about this; this is happening today in the world!” he said.

The work of a carpenter or woodworker at that time, the pope explained, involved not only crafting tools or furniture but also building houses. From an economic point of view, “it did not ensure great earnings.”

Pope Francis said the fact that St. Joseph, as well as Jesus, practiced carpentry reminded him “of all the workers in the world, especially those who do grueling work in mines and factories” as well as “those who are

“Leaders must give everyone the ability to earn bread, because this earning gives them dignity.”

exploited through undocumented work” and the “victims of labor,” who are injured or die on the job because of unsafe working conditions.

He also called on Christians to remember those who are without work and who return home every day, unsuccessful in their efforts to “earn their bread.”

“Earning bread is what gives you dignity and if we do not give our people, our men and women, the ability to earn bread, this is a social injustice in that place, in that nation, in that continent,” the pope said. “Leaders must give everyone the ability to earn bread, because this earning gives them dignity.”

Departing from his prepared remarks, the pope called for a moment of silent prayer for those who have lost their jobs and for those who cannot find work

“Remember each of them and their families today. Let us take a moment of silence, remembering these men, these women, ... crushed by an unbearable burden, reached the point of taking their own lives,” the pope said before bowing his head in prayer.

Pope Francis called on those present to think about what they can do “to recover the value of work” and what the church can do “so that work can be redeemed from the logic of mere profit and can be experienced as a fundamental right and duty of the person, which expresses and increases his or her dignity.”

Farm Labor © Randy Fletcher

