



THE DIGNITY OF WORK & THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

Basic:

Work is important in God's plan for adults and their families, so jobs and pay should be fair.

More - The economy must serve people, not the other way around. Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation. If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected--the right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to the organization and joining of unions, to private property, and to economic initiative.

CST 101: The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=txH7G1RkD8I>

EXAMPLES FROM SCRIPTURE Taken from the USCCB website.

Genesis 2:1-3 - God rests on the seventh day.

Genesis 2:15 - God settles man in the garden of Eden to cultivate and care for it.

Deuteronomy 5:13-15 - The Sabbath is for everyone - all are allowed to rest from their work.

Deuteronomy 14:28-29 - The Lord blesses our work so that we may share its fruits with others.

Deuteronomy 24: 14-15 - Do not withhold wages from your workers, for their livelihood depends on them.

Sirach 34:26-27 - To deprive an employee of wages is to commit murder.

Isaiah 58:3-7 - To observe religious practices, but oppress your workers is false worship.

Jeremiah 22:13 - Woe to him who treats his workers unjustly.

Matthew 20: 1-6 - All workers should be paid a just and living wage.

Mark 2:27 - The Sabbath was made for people, not people for the Sabbath.

Luke 3:10-14 - Practice integrity in your work.

Luke 12:13-21 - One's worth is not determined by an abundance of possessions.

James 5:1-6 - Those who become rich by abusing their workers have sinned against God.



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PRAYER SERVICE

SET UP

- Place this week's picture in your prayer area
- Light a candle
- Open Bible to Matthew 20:1-14

GATHER

Gather around your prepared prayer space. Take a minute to quiet the noise around you and turn your focus towards God.

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Opening Song: Open My Eyes Lord

Open my eyes, Lord. Help me to see your face.
Open my eyes, Lord. Help me to see.

Open my ears, Lord. Help me to hear your voice.
Open my ears, Lord. Help me to hear.

Open my heart, Lord. Help me to love like you.
Open my heart, Lord. Help me to love.

I live within you. Deep in your heart, O Love.
I live within you. Rest now in me.

LISTEN

Now take time to listen to God speaking to you through Scripture.

Reader 1: A reading from the Gospel of Matthew

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent

them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?' They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.' When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.' When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you.'

The Word of the Lord,
ALL: Thanks be to God.

SHARE

Pick a couple questions to talk about for a few minutes. If you get stuck on a question, just move on to a different one.

- Why do you think the man kept going out looking for people to work throughout the day?
- The man asked the people why they were standing idle. Why do you think it is important for people to work?
- Was it fair for the workers to all receive the same pay? If not, how was the man unfair? Did he pay anyone less than a fair day's wage?
- How can this passage help us reflect on the relationship between work, sufficient wages and human dignity?
- Why does every person have a right to decent work?

LISTEN

In light of the conversation you just had, read through the reading again.

Reader 2: A reading from the Gospel of Matthew

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three

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RESPOND

Now that we have listened to God speaking to us, how are we going to respond to His message?

This week place something you have worked for or made in the prayer space. Throughout the week, say a prayer in thanksgiving for your ability to work or create and the dignity or sense of pride it gives ones. Then also pray for those who do not have work or the basic rights of the worker.

SEND

Now that we have spent time in prayer with God, listening to His message and responded, we are sent. Challenged to go out and use what we have learned.

Leader:

Just God, help us use our power as consumers and voters to ensure that the dignity of workers is respected. May we urge business owners and policymakers to place the dignity of the human person at the center of economic decision. Amen.

ALL: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.