

Catholic Diocese of Raleigh

DIGNITY OF WORK AND THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS



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. Employers contribute to the common good through the services or products they provide and by creating jobs that uphold the dignity and rights of workers – to productive work, to decent and just wages, to adequate benefits and security in their old age, to the choice of whether to organize and join unions, to the opportunity for legal status for immigrant workers, to private property, and to economic initiative. Workers also have responsibilities – to provide a fair day's work for a fair day's pay, to treat employers and co-workers with respect, and to carry out their work in ways that contribute to the common good. Workers, employers, and unions should not only advance their own interests, but also work together to advance economic justice and the well-being of all.

Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, No.52
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

“A just wage is a legitimate fruit of work. To refuse or withhold it can be a grave injustice. In determining fair pay both the needs and the contribution of each person must be taken into account. Remuneration for work should guarantee man the opportunity to provide a dignified livelihood for himself and his family on the material social, cultural, and spiritual level, taking into account the role and productivity of each, the state of the business, and the common good.”

Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 2334

For Reflection:

“You shall not defraud a poor and needy hired servant, whether he be one of your own countrymen or one of the aliens who live in your communities. You shall pay him each day's wages before sundown on the day itself, since he is poor and looks forward to them. Otherwise he will cry to the Lord against you, and you will be held guilty.”

Deuteronomy 24:14-15

“The one who plants and the one who waters are equal, and each will receive wages in proportion to his labor. For we are God's co-workers; you are God's field, God's building.”

1 Corinthians 3:8-9

Faithful Citizenship Prayer:

God our Father, may your Holy Spirit guide me in all my decisions and actions. Hear my prayers, and increase in me the will to follow your Son Jesus. Help me to draw on the resources of my faith as I use the opportunities of our democracy to shape a society more respectful of the life, dignity, and rights of the human person, especially the poor and vulnerable. I ask this through Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.