

# Foundations of Faith

## LABOR



### Scriptural Reference

“What profit have workers from their toil? I have seen the business that God has given to mortals to be busied about. God has made everything appropriate to its time, but has put the timeless into their hearts so they cannot find out, from beginning to end, the work which God has done. I recognized that there is nothing better than to rejoice and to do well during life. Moreover, that all can eat and drink and enjoy the good of all their toil—this is a gift of God” (Eccles 3:9-13).

### Homily Hints

“We must first of all recall **a principle that has always been taught by the Church: the principle of the priority of labor over capital.** This principle directly concerns the process of production: In this process labor is always a primary efficient cause, while capital, the whole collection of means of production, remains a mere instrument or instrumental cause.” (St. John Paul II)

All people have the right to economic initiative, to productive work, to just wages and benefits, to decent working conditions, as well as to organize and join unions or other associations. (National Conference of Catholic Bishops)

“Work must be an escape from poverty, not another version of it.” (U.S. Catholic Bishops, *A Place at the Table*)

“It is hard to have dignity without work. This is your difficulty here. This is the prayer you were crying out from this place: “work,” “work,” “work.” It is a necessary prayer. Work means dignity, work means taking food home, work means loving!” (Pope Francis)



### Catholic Social Teaching

*“Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God’s creation.”*

*U.S. Catholic Bishops*

### Prayer Intentions

We pray for the men, women and children who must work in jobs that ignore the dignity of their personhood—

We pray to the Lord...

We pray for the men and women who are not able to find jobs. We pray for their continued perseverance and determination as they continue to seek ways in which to participate in God’s creation and work—

We pray to the Lord...

We pray for the men and women who own companies, who lead companies and who make decisions regarding safe work conditions and adequate wages. We pray that these leaders will act in the best interests of their laborers—

We pray to the Lord...

### Work of Mercy

[Counsel the Doubtful >>](#)

Help others to overcome the doubt – a doubt caused by undignified or lack of work – that causes them to fall into despair and which is often a source of loneliness.

### Educate

Read the U.S. Catholic Bishops’ [Annual Labor Day Statement](#)

### Pray

Encourage your pastor to use the [Concluding Rite](#) for Labor Day Weekend masses

### Donate

The [Oregon Coalition to Stop Wage Theft](#) works to combat the crisis of wage theft in Oregon.



### **For the Bulletin**

“There is no worse material poverty, I am keen to stress, than the poverty which prevents people from earning their bread and deprives them of the dignity of work.” Pope Francis

### **Prayer for Work**

Creator God, thank you for providing us with the gift to share our talents. Provide our community, our nation, our world the fortitude to provide work for all which is decent and fair. Make us faithful stewards of your creation to enhance the human dignity of our global family. We ask this in the name of Jesus, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit now and forever. Amen.

(From *Being Neighbor: The Catechism and Social Justice*, USCCB, April 1998)

## **September 3: Labor Day**

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### **Additional Teaching**

“Since *Rerum Novarum* (Pope Leo XIII, 1891), Catholic teaching has affirmed the dignity of human labor and articulated the rights of workers that flow from it: “...the right to a just wage; the right to rest; the right ‘to a working environment and to manufacturing processes which are not harmful to the workers’ physical health or to their moral integrity’; the right that one’s personality in the workplace should be safeguarded ‘without suffering any affront to one’s conscience or personal dignity’; the right to appropriate subsidies that are necessary for the subsistence of unemployed workers and their families; the right to a pension and to insurance for old age, sickness, and in case of work-related accidents; the right to social security connected with maternity; the right to assemble and form associations.” (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*)