



Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City Prayer and Action Network

INCOME INEQUALITY: “Three days after his election, Pope Francis tied his choice of name to St. Francis of Assisi and said, “How I would love a Church that is poor and for the poor.” This began a stream of commentary on economic inequality and the Church’s response to it. Here is one of many quotes from Pope Francis on this issue:

‘While the income of a minority is increasing exponentially, that of the majority is crumbling. This imbalance results from ideologies which uphold the absolute autonomy of markets and financial speculation, and thus deny the right of control to States, which are charged with providing for the common good. A new, invisible and at times virtual, tyranny is established, one which unilaterally and irremediably imposes its own laws and rules.’ --Address to new Vatican ambassadors, May 16

This quote puts it all out there. Too much money is in the hands of too few, while the vast majority struggle to get by. This is a direct result of ideologies that put the free market before everything else, including the duty of the government to ensure that people’s basic needs are met. The Holy Father says that money must serve, not rule. Some commentators noted that Francis, who emphasizes his role as bishop of Rome, made a point to refer to himself as the pope while delivering these remarks.” Bishop Robert McElroy, USCCB

It is no coincidence that over the past year the United States has seen an orchestrated effort to cripple the National Labor Relations Board and watched the hold up of appointments to the Labor Department, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Consumer Fraud Agency. How better to cripple those agencies? These agencies along with labor unions are the instruments that protect workers and resist their being treated as commodities. These are the very agencies that help reduce gross income inequalities. All of them are under assault from the advocates of today’s unregulated free market capitalism.

The U.S. Catholic Bishops again this year rightly remind us to use Labor Day as a time to reflect on the dignity of workers, on the right to have unions, and on the challenge of gross income inequalities. *Source: USCCB*

What can you do? Educate yourself about the issues of living vs. minimum wages, wage theft, and income inequality:

Wage theft: http://wagetheft.org/wordpress/?page_id=1511#whatis

- o 60% of nursing home workers have had their wages stolen
- o Almost 50 percent of all day laborers (construction) have had wages stolen

Minimum vs. Living wage: <http://www.povertyusa.org/wages-versus-prices/>

Income inequality across the nation: <http://www.povertyusa.org/the-state-of-poverty/poverty-map-state/>

PRAYER: As the sun rises to bring in the new day:

We remember those who descend into the earth, their work begins in darkness, pulling from the earth, the resources we steward.

We remember those who work inside a building away from the light and brightness of the day.

We remember those who work outside in the harsh elements of our world, the bitter cold and sweltering heat of extremes.

We remember those who do not have a job to go to, who are struggling to meet the needs of their daily living expenses, for whom the day becomes long and arduous.

As the sun sets to bring in the evening of rest:

We remember those who work in the night.

We remember those who are trying to recover from their labor and toils of the day.

We remember those who participate in unsafe and dangerous work. We pray for a renewed sense of dignity in their lives and in their work.

God, in your goodness, you have made a home for the worker. Make a place in our hearts for compassion to the men and women who labor tirelessly for basic necessities.

Ensure a place for the men and women who are struggling to find work.

Grant us your wisdom to greet and care for those who are unable to work due to illness or circumstances that prevent their participation.

Be with the children who are not able to run and play, but instead must put in a hard day's work to help their family afford to eat, to live.

Be with us all, Christ Jesus, as we go about the busyness of our work.

Hold us accountable not only for our actions, but most importantly to each of our neighbors.

May we continue to work together to bring about your reign! We ask this in your holy name, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Source: USCCB