

Prayer Service for Workers

PREPARATION FOR PRAYER SERVICE:

Ask each participant to select an object that is symbolic of their occupation/work. During the prayer service, each person will participate in a ritual action in which they place their object on a table before the group and before God.

You will also need a small globe or map.

Before the prayer service begins, place a small table in the front of the room in which you will be meeting. Place a candle and matches on the table.

Work remains a good thing, not only because it is useful and enjoyable, but also because it expresses and increases the worker's dignity. Through work we not only transform the world, we are transformed ourselves, becoming "more a human being."

Pope John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, #9

To learn more about the rights of workers, visit the Education for Justice Web Site at <http://www.coc.org/ej/justice/topics.html?ID=9061>. There you will find our full listing of educational resources and prayers on this topic.

Prayer Service for Workers

OPENING:

Leader lights candle on table.

Leader: Loving God, we come together as a community to thank you for the grace of work. You create each one of us with particular talents and gifts, and you call us to use them in the service of love and justice. Through work, we transform both the world and ourselves.

Reader 1: Today we give thanks for jobs that fulfill Your intention for work.

Reader 2: For jobs where we can use our hands to build houses of peace.

Reader 3: For jobs where we can use our minds to explore the mysteries of the universe.

Reader 4: For jobs where we can use our hearts to offer care to those in need.

Reader 5: For jobs where we can develop our gifts and talents and express our dignity.

All: O God, we give you thanks.

PRESENTATION OF THE SYMBOLS:

All: O God, accept the fruits of our labor.

One by one, each participant comes forward and reverently places a symbol of his/her occupation/work on the table. The participant then recites the following prayer aloud:

Holy God, consecrate my daily life and daily work, that I might be a reflection of your grace. Bless my gifts so that through my work they might be developed and might serve as a channel of your love, peace and justice.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

SHARING

Ask participants to share any thoughts they might have about the meaning of their work.

Leader: We now turn our hearts and minds to the larger community of all of our sisters and brothers throughout the world. We take a moment to reflect on their suffering, both here in our nation and abroad.

Leader places globe or map of the world on the table.

PETITIONS:

Reader 1: Loving God, with humility and respect, we acknowledge our suffering sisters and brothers, and we pray for them now. The response to our petitions will be “O God, help us to create a more just world.”

Reader 2: We pray for those who are unemployed or underemployed.

RESPONSE

Reader 3: We pray for those who work in hazardous conditions without sufficient protection.

RESPONSE

Reader 4: We pray for those who face discrimination, harassment or abuse in the work place.

RESPONSE

Reader 5: We pray for those who are unable to balance job commitments with the needs of their family.

RESPONSE

Reader 1: We pray for those who are injured on the job and feel forgotten and abandoned.

RESPONSE

Reader 2: We pray for those who receive insufficient wages to care for their family’s needs.

RESPONSE

Reader 3: We pray for those children who must quit school in order to work.

RESPONSE

Reader 4: God of forgiveness, we repent for our ignorance, our apathy and our greed that makes us blind to the plight of so many of our brothers and sisters. As one body, we share common hurts, common joys, and a common labor. May we work towards a more just work place for all people, where the rights and dignity of all workers are upheld above all else.



Prayer Service for Workers (continued)

Reader 5: We pray for all legislators and other elected officials, that they might remember the vulnerable in the workplace and develop legislation that ensures just labor standards for all.

RESPONSE

Reader 1: We pray for all owners and managers, that they might recognize the dignity of workers and uphold the standards of our faith tradition by providing living wages, benefits and the freedom of association.

RESPONSE

Reader 2: We pray for all employees, that their dignity might be expressed and increased through their work and that they might find the courage to work for more just labor conditions.

RESPONSE

CLOSING PRAYER:

Leader: Eternal God, we thank you for work. Free us so that we might dedicate our hearts and lives to a vision of life with dignity for all workers.

All: Amen.

This prayer service contains some prayers and petitions of the National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice: <http://www.nicwj.org>