

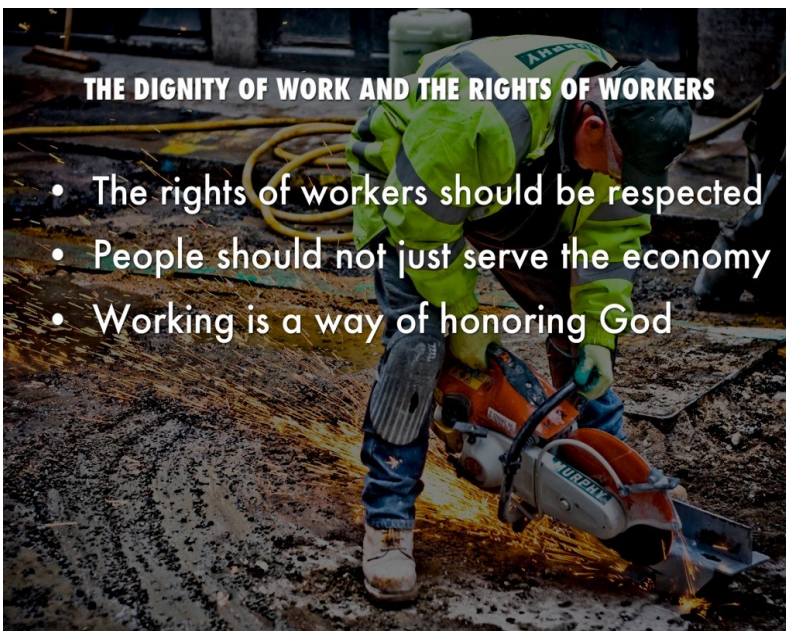
## Commemorating Workers on Labor Day

*"...[S]ociety and the State must ensure **wage levels adequate for the maintenance of the worker and his family**, including a certain amount for savings. This requires a continuous effort to improve workers' training and capability so that their work will be more skilled and productive, as well as careful controls and adequate legislative measures to block shameful forms of exploitation, especially to the disadvantage of the most vulnerable workers, of immigrants and of those on the margins of society. The role of **trade unions** in negotiating minimum salaries and working conditions is decisive in this area.*

*-Pope St. John Paul II, in his encyclical Centesimus Annus, marking the centennial of Rerum Novarum*

For over a century, the Church has declared again and again in papal encyclicals and bishops' pastoral letters that workers have the right to organize into labor unions in order to protect workers' dignity by advocating for living wages and safe workplaces. Learn more at <http://usccb.org/upload/Primer-labor-Catholic-social-teaching.pdf>

This year, put labor back into Labor Day. Remember workers, especially low-wage workers, who are struggling against exploitation, unsafe working conditions and starvation wages. Stand with workers striving to form labor unions to protect their rights. Make the effort to buy Fair Trade and union-made products. Join with U.S. Bishops in supporting an increase in the minimum wage. Ask your pastor to include the following prayer during Masses on Labor Day weekend:



*On this Labor Day weekend we ask Your special blessing on all people who labor in the workplace or at home, in the U.S. and around the world.*

*We especially pray for Your blessings on workers who do not have jobs and for those whose inadequate pay does not allow them to live the full life You intend for each of us.*

*Creator God, help us to build a new world in the midst of the old.*

*A world where all workers are valued.*

*A world where those who clean houses are also able to buy houses to live in.*

*A world where those who grow food can also afford to eat their fill.*

*We pray for the coming of a world where all workers everywhere share in the abundance that You have given us. We ask these things knowing that You give us the courage and strength to live out our faith in the workplace and the marketplace, as well as in the sanctuary. Amen.*

- Edie Rasell, Interfaith Worker Justice

For additional resources go to <http://www.iwj.org/resources/labor-day-weekend-resources>

Mark Your Calendar and Spread the Word in Your Parish: September 1



**POPE FRANCIS SETS  
WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR CARE OF CREATION:  
Giving Thanks, Asking God for Assistance  
and for Mercy for Sins Committed Against the Planet  
as We Live Out Our *Essential* Vocation  
as Custodians Of Creation**

Pope Francis recently declared September 1 as World Day of Prayer for Care of Creation, which has been commemorated in the Orthodox Church for over 20 years. The Holy Father, quoting from his encyclical *Laudato Si*, writes:

The annual World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation offers to individual believers and to the community a precious opportunity to **renew our personal participation in this vocation as custodians of creation**, raising to God our thanks for the marvelous works that He has entrusted to our care, invoking His help for the protection of creation and His mercy for the sins committed against the world in which we live.

The celebration of the Day on the same date as the Orthodox Church will be a valuable opportunity to bear witness to our growing communion with our Orthodox brothers. We live in a time where all Christians are faced with identical and important challenges and we must give common replies to these in order to appear more credible and effective. Therefore **it is my hope that this Day can involve, in some way, other Churches** and ecclesial Communities and be celebrated in union with the initiatives that the World Council of Churches is promoting on this issue.

As Christians we wish to offer our contribution towards overcoming the ecological crisis which humanity is living through. Therefore, first of all we must draw from our rich spiritual heritage the reasons which feed our passion for the care of creation, always remembering that for believers in Jesus Christ, the Word of God who became man for us, “the life of the spirit is not dissociated from the body or from nature or from worldly realities, but lived in and with them, in communion with all that surrounds us.” (*Laudato Si*, 216).

**The ecological crisis therefore calls us to a profound spiritual conversion:** Christians are called to “an ecological conversion whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them.” (*Laudato Si*, 217). Thus, **“living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience.”** (*Laudato Si*, 217).

[http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2015/08/10/pope\\_francis\\_announces\\_day\\_of\\_prayer\\_for\\_creation/1164087](http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2015/08/10/pope_francis_announces_day_of_prayer_for_creation/1164087)

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