

# Catholic Theme: Dignity of Work and Service



## Scriptural Story

### **The Labourers in the Vineyard**

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the labourers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o’clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o’clock, he did the same. And about five o’clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, ‘Why are you standing here idle all day?’ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the labourers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.’ When those hired about five o’clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

**Matthew 20: 1-16**

### **Jesus Washes the Disciples’ Feet**

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already put in into the heart of Jesus son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?” Jesus answered, “You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.” Peter said to him, “You will never wash my feet.” Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.” Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!” Jesus said to him, “One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you.” For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, “Not all of you are clean.” After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord – and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.”

**John 13:1-15**

## Description & Related Topics

### Description:

The call to work is a fundamental part of our humanity, made in the image and likeness of God. The book of Genesis portrays God as working six days to bring the world into existence. This tells us there is something holy about work. Whether for securing a livelihood or attending to the needs of others, all work is an important way human persons live out their vocation to holiness.

Work is a primary way for human persons to express who they are in the world. Jesus, who devoted most of his life to working as a carpenter, shows us the dignity of work and service to others. His modeling of servant leadership calls forth and affirms the giftedness of every human person. Work is therefore more than just a role we play in society. It is a divine call to join in God's ongoing creative activity in the world, and in a sense, a call to be *co-creator* with God. Work thus allows us to participate in the building up of the Reign of God.

Work and service together thus exists to serve the good of the human person and the common good. Workers have the right to: meaningful work; safe working conditions; participation in decision making processes which affect their work; security in case of sickness, disability, unemployment or old age; and the right to form unions. The economy and means of production exist to serve people, not the other way around.

**Anchor Concepts:** Common Good, Creativity/Design, Discovery, Empowerment, Globalism, Human Dignity, Interdependence, Justice, Lifestyle, Solidarity, Vocation

### Related Concepts:

- SERVICE
- CHURCH
- EMPLOYMENT / WORKPLACE
- LABOUR
- DIGNITY OF WORK / FULFILLMENT
- INDUSTRIALIZATION
- PRODUCTION / PRODUCTIVITY
- WEALTH
- LEADERSHIP
- SERVANT LEADERSHIP
- TECHNOLOGY
- COLLABORATION
- CAREER AND PERSONAL PLANNING
- PERSONHOOD AND IDENTITY
- PROFIT MOTIVE
- ETHICS
- COMMUNITY / COMMON GOOD
- VOLUNTEERISM
- COMMUNITY SERVICE
- GIFTS
- TALENTS
- VOCATION
- DISCERNMENT
- HOUSEHOLDING

## Scripture References

### **God Rested from Work on the Seventh Day**

And on the seventh day, God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work He had done in creation.

**Genesis 2: 1-3**

### **Against Withholding Wages**

You shall not withhold the wages of poor and needy labourers, whether other Israelites or aliens who reside in your land in one of your towns. You shall pay them their wages daily before sunset because they are poor and their livelihood depends on them; otherwise they might cry out to the Lord against you, and you would incur guilt.

**Deuteronomy 24: 14-15**

### **Allowing Labourers to Eat from the Harvest**

You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain.

**Deuteronomy 25: 4**

### **Serving God (not Wealth) Through Work**

You cannot serve God and wealth.

**Matthew 6: 24**

### **Light of the World: Good Works Glorifying God**

You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

**Matthew 5: 14-16**

### **Faithfulness to Work Rewarded**

Who then is the faithful and wise slave, whom his master has put in charge of his household, to give the other slaves their allowance of food at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master will find at work when he arrives. Truly I tell you, he will put that one in charge of all his possessions.

**Matthew 24: 45-47**

### **Jesus Glorified the Father by His Work**

I have glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do.

**John 17: 4**

### **Apostle Paul, Tentmaker**

After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. There he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, Paul went to see them, and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them, and they worked together –by trade they were tentmakers.

**Acts 18: 1-3**

### **Working to Please God**

Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord and not for your masters, since you know that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you serve the Lord Christ.

**Colossians 3: 23-24**

### **Faith Without Works is Dead**

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

**James 2: 14-17**

### **Avoid Idleness**

Now we command you, beloved, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to keep away from believers who are living in idleness and not according to the tradition that they received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us; we were not idle when we were with you, and we did not eat anyone's bread without paying for it; but with toil and labour we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you. This was not because we do not have that right, but in order to give you an example to imitate. For even when we were with you, we gave you this command: Anyone unwilling to work should not eat. For we hear that some of you are living in idleness, mere busybodies, not doing any work. Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living. Brothers and sisters, do not be weary in doing what is right. Take note of those who do not obey what we say in this letter; have nothing to do with them, so that they may be ashamed.

**2 Thessalonians 3: 6**

### **Divine Call to Rule Creation Through Work**

Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and subdue it.

**Genesis 1: 28**

### **Resting from Work on the Sabbath**

Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest,...

**Exodus 23: 12a**

### **Artistic Work as Spiritual Gift**

The Lord spoke to Moses: 'See, I have called by name Bezalel, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: and I have filled him with divine Spirit, with ability, intelligence and knowledge in every kind of craft, to devise artistic designs, to work in silver, and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, and in every kind of craft.'

**Exodus 31: 5**

### **Futility of Working Apart from God's Will**

Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain.

**Psalms 127: 11**

### **Wisdom Through Working Trades**

How can one become wise who handles the plow,  
and who glories in the shaft of a goad,  
who drives oxen and is occupied with their work,  
and whose talk is about bulls?

He sets his heart on plowing furrows,  
and he is careful about fodder for the heifers.

So too is every artisan and master artisan  
who labours by night as well as by day;  
those who cut the signets of seals,  
each is diligent in making a great variety;  
they set their heart on painting a lifelike image,  
and they are careful to finish their work.

So too is the smith, sitting by the anvil,  
intent on his iron-work;

the breath of the fire melts his flesh,  
and he struggles with the heat of the furnace;  
the sound of the hammer deafens his ears,  
and his eyes are on the pattern of the object.

He sets his heart on finishing his handiwork,  
and he is careful to complete its decoration.

So too is the potter sitting at his work  
and turing the wheel with his feet;  
he is always deeply concerned over his products,  
and he produces them in quantity.

He molds the clay with his arm  
and makes it pliable with his feet;  
he sets his heart to finish the glazing,  
and he takes care in the firing of the kiln.

All these rely on their hands,  
and all are skilful in their own work.  
Without them no city can be inhabited,  
and wherever they live, they will not go hungry.  
Yet they are not sought out for the council of the people,  
nor do they attain eminence in the public assembly.  
They do not sit in the judge's seat,  
Nor do they understand the decisions of the courts;  
they cannot expound discipline or judgment,  
and they are not found among the rulers.  
But they maintain the fabric of the world,  
and their concern is for the exercise of their trade.

**Sirach 38: 24-34**

### **Harvest is Great**

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest."

**Matthew 9: 35-38**

### **The Reward for Developing one's Talents**

His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things."

**Matthew 25: 21**

### **The Labour of Discipleship**

I sent you to reap that for which you did not labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour.

**John 4: 38**

### **Seek to Do Good**

But we appeal to you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who labour among you, and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you; esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. And we urge you, beloved to admonish the idlers, encourage the faint hearted, help the weak, be patient with all of them. See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all.

**1 Thessalonians 5: 12-15**

## Church Teachings

### Documents of Vatican II

**36** Therefore, by their competence in secular training and by their activity, elevated from within by the grace of Christ, let [the laity] vigorously contribute their effort, so that created goods may be perfected by human labor, technical skill and civic culture for the benefit of all men according to the design of the Creator and the light of His Word. May the goods of this world be more equitably distributed among all men, and may they in their own way be conducive to universal progress in human and Christian freedom. In this manner, through the members of the Church, will Christ progressively illumine the whole of human society with His saving light.

#### *Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church)*

**34** Throughout the course of the centuries, men have labored to better the circumstances of their lives through a monumental amount of individual and collective effort. To believers, this point is settled: considered in itself, this human activity accords with God's will. For man, created to God's image, received a mandate to subject to himself the earth and all it contains, and to govern the world with justice and holiness; a mandate to relate himself and the totality of things to Him Who was to be acknowledged as the Lord and Creator of all. Thus, by the subjection of all things to man, the name of God would be wonderful in all the earth.

This mandate concerns the whole of everyday activity as well. For while providing the substance of life for themselves and their families, men and women are performing their activities in a way which appropriately benefits society. They can justly consider that by their labor they are unfolding the Creator's work, consulting the advantages of their brother men, and are contributing by their personal industry to the realization history of the divine plan.

Thus, far from thinking that works produced by man's own talent and energy are in opposition to God's power, and that the rational creature exists as a kind of rival to the Creator, Christians are convinced that the triumphs of the human race are a sign of God's grace and the flowering of His own mysterious design. For the greater man's power becomes, the farther his individual and community responsibility extends. Hence it is clear that men are not deterred by the Christian message from building up the world, or impelled to neglect the welfare of their fellows, but that they are rather more stringently bound to do these very things.

#### *Gaudium et Spes, (The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World)*

**43** The Christian who neglects his temporal duties neglects his duties toward his neighbour and even God, and jeopardizes his eternal salvation. Christians should rather rejoice that they can follow the example of Christ, who worked as an artisan. In the exercise of all their earthly activities, they can thereby gather their humane, domestic, professional, social, and technical enterprises into one vital synthesis with religious values, under whose supreme direction all things are harmonized unto God's glory.

**67** Human labour which is expended in the production and exchange of goods or in the performance of economic services is superior to the other elements of economic life. For the latter have only the nature of tools. Whether it is engaged in independently or paid for by someone else, this labour comes immediately from the person. In a sense, the person stamps the things of nature with his seal and subdues them to his will. It is ordinarily by his labour that a man supports himself and his family, is joined to his fellow men and serves them, and is enabled to exercise genuine charity and be a partner in the work of bringing God's creation to perfection. Indeed, we hold that by offering his labour to God a man becomes associated with the redemptive work itself of Jesus Christ, who conferred an eminent dignity on labour when at Nazareth He worked with His own hands.

#### *Gaudium et Spes, (The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World)*

**68** In economic enterprises it is persons who are joined together, that is, free and independent human beings created to the image of God. Therefore, with attention to the functions of each-owners or employers, management or labor-and without doing harm to the necessary unity of management, the

active sharing of all in the administration and profits of these enterprises in ways to be properly determined is to be promoted. Since more often, however, decisions concerning economic and social conditions, on which the future lot of the workers and of their children depends, are made not within the business itself but by institutions on a higher level, the workers themselves should have a share also in determining these conditions-in person or through freely elected delegates.

Among the basic rights of the human person is to be numbered the right of freely founding unions for working people. These should be able truly to represent them and to contribute to the organizing of economic life in the right way. Included is the right of freely taking part in the activity of these unions without risk of reprisal. Through this orderly participation joined to progressive economic and social formation, all will grow day by day in the awareness of their own function and responsibility, and thus they will be brought to feel that they are comrades in the whole task of economic development and in the attainment of the universal common good according to their capacities and aptitudes.

When, however, socio-economic disputes arise, efforts must be made to come to a peaceful settlement. Although recourse must always be had first to a sincere dialogue between the parties, a strike, nevertheless, can remain even in present day circumstances a necessary, though ultimate, aid for the defense of the workers' own rights and the fulfillment of their just desires. As soon as possible, however, ways should be sought to resume negotiation and the discussion of reconciliation.

***Gaudium et Spes, (The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World)***

## Catechism of the Catholic Church

### A day of grace and rest from work

**2184** Just as God "rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done," human life has a rhythm of work and rest. The institution of the Lord's Day helps everyone enjoy adequate rest and leisure to cultivate their familial, cultural, social, and religious lives.

**2185** On Sundays and other holy days of obligation, the faithful are to refrain from engaging in work or activities that hinder the worship owed to God, the joy proper to the Lord's Day, the performance of the works of mercy, and the appropriate relaxation of mind and body. Family needs or important social service can legitimately excuse from the obligation of Sunday rest. The faithful should see to it that legitimate excuses do not lead to habits prejudicial to religion, family life, and health.

### ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

**2426** The development of economic activity and growth in production are meant to provide for the needs of human beings. Economic life is not meant solely to multiply goods produced and increase profit or power; it is ordered first of all to the service of persons, of the whole man, and of the entire human community. Economic activity, conducted according to its own proper methods, is to be exercised within the limits of the moral order, in keeping with social justice so as to correspond to God's plan for man.

**2427** *Human work* proceeds directly from persons created in the image of God and called to prolong the work of creation by subduing the earth, both with and for one another. Hence work is a duty: "If any one will not work, let him not eat." Work honors the Creator's gifts and the talents received from him. It can also be redemptive. By enduring the hardship of work in union with Jesus, the carpenter of Nazareth and the one crucified on Calvary, man collaborates in a certain fashion with the Son of God in his redemptive work. He shows himself to be a disciple of Christ by carrying the cross, daily, in the work he is called to accomplish. Work can be a means of sanctification and a way of animating earthly realities with the Spirit of Christ.

**2428** In work, the person exercises and fulfills in part the potential inscribed in his nature. The primordial value of labor stems from man himself, its author and its beneficiary. Work is for man, not man for work.

Everyone should be able to draw from work the means of providing for his life and that of his family, and of serving the human community.

**2429** Everyone has the *right of economic initiative*; everyone should make legitimate use of his talents to contribute to the abundance that will benefit all and to harvest the just fruits of his labour. He should seek to observe regulations issued by legitimate authority for the sake of the common good.

**2430** *Economic life* brings into play different interests, often opposed to one another. This explains why the conflicts that characterize it arise. Efforts should be made to reduce these conflicts by negotiation that respects the rights and duties of each social partner: those responsible for business enterprises, representatives of wage- earners (for example, trade unions), and public authorities when appropriate.

**2431** *The responsibility of the state.* "Economic activity, especially the activity of a market economy, cannot be conducted in an institutional, juridical, or political vacuum. On the contrary, it presupposes sure guarantees of individual freedom and private property, as well as a stable currency and efficient public services. Hence the principal task of the state is to guarantee this security, so that those who work and produce can enjoy the fruits of their labours and thus feel encouraged to work efficiently and honestly. . . . Another task of the state is that of overseeing and directing the exercise of human rights in the economic sector. However, primary responsibility in this area belongs not to the state but to individuals and to the various groups and associations which make up society."

**2432** Those *responsible for business enterprises* are responsible to society for the economic and ecological effects of their operations. They have an obligation to consider the good of persons and not

only the increase of profits. Profits are necessary, however. They make possible the investments that ensure the future of a business and they guarantee employment.

**2433** *Access to employment* and to professions must be open to all without unjust discrimination: men and women, healthy and disabled, natives and immigrants. For its part society should, according to circumstances, help citizens find work and employment.

**2434** A *just wage* is the legitimate fruit of work. To refuse or withhold it can be a grave injustice. In determining fair pay both the needs and the contributions 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 the productivity of each, the state of the business, and the common good." Agreement between the parties is not sufficient to justify morally the amount to be received in wages.

**2435** Recourse to a *strike* is morally legitimate when it cannot be avoided, or at least when it is necessary to obtain a proportionate benefit. It becomes morally unacceptable when accompanied by violence, or when objectives are included that are not directly linked to working conditions or are contrary to the common good.

**2436** It is unjust not to pay the social security contributions required by legitimate authority. *Unemployment* almost always wounds its victim's dignity and threatens the equilibrium of his life. Besides the harm done to him personally, it entails many risks for his family.

## Other Church Documents

**9** 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.

***Laborem Exercens, (On Human Work), Encyclical Letter of Pope John Paul II, 1981***

**25** By our labour we are unfolding the Creator's work and contributing to the realization of God's plan on earth. The Christian message does not stop us from building the world or make us neglect our fellow human beings. On the contrary it binds us more firmly to do just that.

***Laborem Exercens, (On Human Work), Encyclical Letter of Pope John Paul II, 1981***

**43** The obligation to earn one's bread presumes the right to do so. A society that denies this right cannot be justified, nor can it attain social peace.

***Centesimus Annus, (The Hundredth Year), Encyclical Letter of Pope John Paul II, 1991***

**3** Human work is the key to the solution ... of the whole "social question". To consider work is of decisive importance when trying to make life "more human."

***Laborem Exercens, (On Human Work), Encyclical Letter of Pope John Paul II, 1981***

**3** Yet the workers' rights cannot be doomed to be the mere result of economic systems aimed at maximum profits. The thing that must shape the whole economy is respect for the workers' rights within each country and all through the world's economy.

***Laborem Exercens, (On Human Work), Encyclical Letter of Pope John Paul II, 1981***

**25** Created in God's image, we were given the mandate to transform the earth. By their work people share in God's creating activity ... Awareness that our work is a sharing in God's work ought to permeate even the most ordinary daily activities.

By our labor we are unfolding the Creator's work and contributing to the realization of God's plan on earth. The Christian message does not stop us from building the world or make us neglect our fellow human beings. On the contrary it binds us more firmly to do just that.

***Laborem Exercens, (On Human Work), Encyclical Letter of Pope John Paul II, 1981***

### Stake Everything on Charity

**50** In our own time, there are so many needs which demand a compassionate response from Christians. Our world is entering the new millennium burdened by the contradictions of an economic, cultural and technological progress which offers immense possibilities to a fortunate few, while leaving millions of others not only on the margins of progress but in living conditions far below the minimum demanded by human dignity. How can it be that even today there are still people dying of hunger? Condemned to illiteracy? Lacking the most basic medical care? Without a roof over their heads?

The scenario of poverty can extend indefinitely, if in addition to its traditional forms we think of its newer patterns. These latter often affect financially affluent sectors and groups which are nevertheless threatened by despair at the lack of meaning in their lives, by drug addiction, by fear of abandonment in old age or sickness, by marginalization or social discrimination. In this context Christians must learn to make their act of faith in Christ by discerning his voice in the cry for help that rises from this world of poverty. This means carrying on the tradition of charity which has expressed itself in so many different ways in the past two millennia, but which today calls for even greater resourcefulness. Now is the time for a new "creativity" in charity, not only by ensuring that help is effective but also by "getting close" to those who suffer, so that the hand that helps is seen not as a humiliating handout but as a sharing between brothers and sisters.

We must therefore ensure that in every Christian community the poor feel at home. Would not this approach be the greatest and most effective presentation of the good news of the Kingdom? Without this

form of evangelization through charity and without the witness of Christian poverty the proclamation of the Gospel, which is itself the prime form of charity, risks being misunderstood or submerged by the ocean of words which daily engulfs us in today's society of mass communications. The charity of *works* ensures an unmistakable efficacy to the charity of *words*.

***Apostolic Letter, Novo Millennio Ineunte, Pope John Paul II, 2000***

### **Today's Challenges**

**52** Clearly, all this must be done in a specifically Christian way: *the laity* especially must be present in these areas in fulfillment of their lay vocation, without ever yielding to the temptation to turn Christian communities into mere social agencies. In particular, the Church's relationship with civil society should respect the latter's autonomy and areas of competence, in accordance with the teachings of the *Church's social doctrine*.

Well known are the efforts made by the Church's teaching authority, especially in the twentieth century, to interpret social realities in the light of the Gospel and to offer in a timely and systematic way its contribution to the social question, which has now assumed a global dimension.

The ethical and social aspect of the question is an essential element of Christian witness: we must reject the temptation to offer a privatized and individualistic spirituality which ill accords with the demands of charity, to say nothing of the implications of the Incarnation and, in the last analysis, of Christianity's eschatological tension. While that tension makes us aware of the relative character of history, it in no way implies that we withdraw from "building" history. Here the teaching of the Second Vatican Council is more timely than ever: "The Christian message does not inhibit men and women from building up the world, or make them disinterested in the welfare of their fellow human beings: on the contrary it obliges them more fully to do these very things".

***Apostolic Letter, Novo Millennio Ineunte, Pope John Paul II, 2000***

## Canadian/Ontario Documentation

### ***Working And Living In Ontario***

Ontario is experiencing considerable economic prosperity at the present time. In recent years businesses have been created or expanded, markets have boomed, consumer confidence has grown. Yet not all is rosy. The "competitive" marketplace is taking its toll on workers, unemployment remains a concern, and the gap between rich and poor has grown. Recently the threat of an economic slowdown has appeared on the horizon. Perhaps even more distressing, there is widespread acceptance of an impoverished concept regarding the nature of work and its place in our lives.

***Working And Living In Ontario, Pastoral Letter of the OCCB, 2001***

For complete text, go to <http://www.occb.on.ca/english/working.html>

### **Principles to be Observed by all Governments**

What follow are several principles which apply to any government, at any time and under any circumstances. The people of Ontario must expect of any government they elect that its policies and actions respect these principles....

Governments must recognize that human beings derive identity and self-esteem, as well as economic survival, from the use of their God-given talents in useful work and, therefore, have the right to employment. "The obligation to earn one's bread by the sweat of one's brow also presumes the right to do so. A society in which this right is systematically denied, in which economic policies do not allow workers to reach satisfactory levels of employment, cannot be justified from an ethical point of view, nor can that society attain social peace." (*On the Hundredth Anniversary of Rerum Novarum*, No. 43). The right to employment includes the right to conditions of work which are in keeping with workers' needs for safety, for respect, for just remuneration and for security. Human labour cannot be treated as just another commodity at the whim of the supply and demand of the market. Government must be ready to intervene with strategies and regulations which will create satisfying work for all at a level of income which will provide for the support of a family...

Governments must support the rights of workers to unite in order to protect the quality of their lives, their safety and their security. "Organizations of this type are an indispensable element of social life." (*On Human Work*, No. 20) Hence the right of labour to form unions and to bargain collectively must be guaranteed. Actions taken by all parties in labour relations must withstand the scrutiny of what is good for the parties but also what is good for society at large.

***Choosing A Government, Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1998***

For complete text, go to <http://www.occb.on.ca/english/choosing.html>

### **On Child Labour**

The Bishops of Canada encourage ethical production and consumption activities out of a deeply held conviction that the economy should serve persons, not the other way around. As Pope John Paul II recently said, "If seen in the proper light, globalization is an intrinsically ambivalent phenomenon, half way between a potential good for humanity and a social ill with grave consequences. In order to orient its development in a positive light, it will be necessary to undertake profound efforts to build a 'globalization of solidarity', encompassing a new culture, with new rules and new regulations and new national, as well as international, institutions. In particular, it will be important to intensify the collaboration between political and economic forces, in order to elaborate specific projects to protect those who could become the victims of the processes of globalization on a planetary scale. I think, for example, ... of legislation that prevents the exploitation of children who are forced to go to work at a young age" (statement of Pope John Paul II to the members of the Ethics and Economy Foundation, Rome, May 17, 2001, translation).

***Letter from Archbishop James Weisgerber to Industry Minister Brian Tobin Concerning the Exploitation of Children in the Clothing Industry, July 17, 2001, Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2001 (Used with permission.)***

## Quotations

The true way to render ourselves happy is to love our work and to find in it our pleasure.

**Francoise de Motteville**

I watched a small man with thick calluses on both hands work 15 and 16 hours a day. I saw him once literally bleed from the bottoms of his feet, a man who came here uneducated, alone, unable to speak the language, who taught me all I needed to know about faith and hard work by the simple eloquence of his example.

**Mario Cuomo**

Good leaders make people feel that they're at the very heart of things, not at the periphery. Everyone feels that he or she makes a difference to the success of the organization. When that happens people feel centered and that gives their work meaning.

**Warren G. Bennis**

Whenever it is in any way possible, every boy and girl should choose as his life work some occupation which he should like to do anyhow, even if he did not need the money.

**Irish Blessing**

When our eyes see our hands doing the work of our hearts, the circle of Creation is completed inside us, the doors of our souls fly open and love steps forth to heal everything in sight.

**Michael Bridge**

For the rest of my life I'm going to trust that God is always at work in all things, and give Him thanks long before my simplest prayers are answered.

**Nancy Parker Brummett**

The expectations of life depend upon diligence; the mechanic that would perfect his work must first sharpen his tools.

**Confucius**

One should guard against preaching to young people success in the customary form as the main aim in life. The most important motive for work in school and in life is pleasure in work, pleasure in its result, and the knowledge of the value of the result to the community.

**Albert Einstein**

Hard work spotlights the character of people: some turn up their sleeves, some turn up their noses, and some don't turn up at all.

**Sam Ewing**

Laziness may appear attractive, but work gives satisfaction.

**Anne Frank**

Be aware of wonder. Live a balanced life--learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some."

**Robert L. Fulghum**

Teachers believe they have a gift for giving; it drives them with the same irrepressible drive that drives others to create a work of art or a market or a building.

**Angelo Bartlett Giammati**

Hope is a state of mind, not of the world. Hope, in this deep and powerful sense, is not the same as joy that things are going well, or willingness to invest in enterprises that are obviously heading for success, but rather an ability to work for something because it is good.

**Václav Havel**

## Web Resources

### The Vatican

<http://www.vatican.va/>

The official web site of the Vatican contains an impressive collection of materials with a useful internal search engine.

### The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

<http://www.cccb.ca/Home.htm?NL=1>

The official web site of the CCCB contains extensive documentation, including recent media releases and publications, with a wide variety of useful links to other Church and Catholic organizations' web sites.

### Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops

<http://www.occb.on.ca/>

The official web site of the OCCB contains extensive resources from the Catholic Bishops of Ontario as well as useful links to other Church and Catholic organizations' web sites. The Conference's jurisdiction over Ontario Catholic schools makes this site particularly relevant.

### The Vatican: Catechism of the Catholic Church

[http://www.vatican.va/archive/catechism/ccc\\_toc.htm](http://www.vatican.va/archive/catechism/ccc_toc.htm)

In Part III, Life in Christ, Chapter Two focuses on *The Human Community*. The Church's teaching on Social Justice is detailed, including sections on the respect for the human person, equality and differences among men (people) and solidarity. Section two deals with the Ten Commandments and the Fourth Commandment, "You Shall Love your Neighbour as Yourself" and the Fifth, "Thou Shall Not Kill" concentrate on themes central to social justice. The Seventh, "You Shall Not Steal" also addresses economic activity such as labour, solidarity among nations, and love for the poor. While the Catechism has no links and is difficult to read at times, it provides a useful resource to the underpinnings of Church teachings on social justice.

### Canadian Labour Congress

<http://www.clc-ctc.ca/>

Canada's largest labour organization, the CLC provides a weekly online newsletter, and magazine articles on labour issues like the environment, sweatshop and safety and working conditions, international trade, current Canadian legislation and broader solidarity concerns. The site also focuses on human rights and international issues, with quick shortcuts to longer CLC and other non-governmental organization papers. Notable sections include Boycotts, where the CLC condemns companies who hurt Canadian jobs or international labour conditions, and the Youth section which outlines facts about youth in the labour market, youth labour events, and a description of their view of unions as a means to raise pay, job opportunity and workplace conditions for young people in Canada.

### Anti-Slavery

<http://www.antislavery.org>

Slavery is not a practice consigned to the history books. The website of this charity investigates issues such as child trafficking, forced labour and child labour. Read their latest press releases, use their teacher and classroom resources, or browse the photo gallery. An attractive site that is easy to use.

### Notable Quotations from Catholic Social Teaching on Work and Workers' Rights (Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis Office for Catholic Social Teaching)

[http://www.osjspm.org/cst/q\\_work.htm](http://www.osjspm.org/cst/q_work.htm)

This is an extremely helpful website for helping persons interested in Catholic Social Teaching understand its major themes. The quotes on work and workers' rights in this section are brief and very helpful.

**Notable Quotations from Catholic Social Teaching on Labour and Capital  
(Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis Office for Catholic Social Teaching)**

[http://www.osjspm.org/cst/q\\_labcap.htm](http://www.osjspm.org/cst/q_labcap.htm)

This section of the St. Paul and Minneapolis Archdiocese website contains helpful quotes pointing out the importance of ensuring that raw resources and technology (capital) are always placed at the service of human work, which always has supreme value over resources, the means of production and goods produced.

## Links to Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectation

### **A Discerning Believer Formed in the Catholic Faith Community who:**

**CGE 1g** Understands that one's purpose or call in life comes from God and strives to discern and live out this call throughout life's journey

### **A Reflective and Creative Thinker who:**

**CGE 3a** Recognizes there is more grace in our world than sin and that hope is essential in facing all challenges

**CGE 3c** Thinks reflectively and creatively to evaluate situations and solve problems;

**CGE 3e** Adopts a holistic approach to life by integrating learning from various subject areas and experience

### **A Self-Directed, Responsible, Life-Long Learner who:**

**CGE 4b** Demonstrates flexibility and adaptability

**CGE 4e** Sets appropriate goals and priorities in school, work and personal life

**CGE 4f** Applies effective communication, decision-making, problem-solving, time and resource management skills

**CGE 4g** Examines and reflects on one's personal values, abilities and aspirations influencing life's choices and opportunities

**CGE 4h** Participates in leisure and fitness activities for a balanced and healthy lifestyle.

### **A Collaborative Contributor who:**

**CGE 5a** Works effectively as an interdependent team member.

**CGE 5b** Thinks critically about the meaning and purpose of work.

**CGE 5c** Develops one's God-given potential and makes a meaningful contribution to society.

**CGE 5d** Finds meaning, dignity, fulfillment and vocation in work which contributes to the common good.

**CGE 5e** Respects the rights, responsibilities and contributions of self and others.

**CGE 5f** Exercises Christian leadership in the achievement of individual and group goals

**CGE 5g** Achieves excellence, originality, and integrity in one's own work and supports these qualities in the work of others.

**CGE 5h** Applies skills for employability, self-employment and entrepreneurship relative to Christian vocation.

### **A Caring Family Member who:**

**CGE 6e** Ministers to the family, school, parish and wider community through service.

### **A Responsible Citizen who:**

**CGE 7a** Acts morally and legally as a person formed in Catholic traditions.

## Reflection Questions

### Personal and Group Reflections

#### Personal Reflection:

*1. I call to mind those who do not have a decent job: the unemployed; the underemployed; and the working poor.*

*2. I reflect on how I would feel if deprived of work that serves a human purpose.*

#### Small Group Reflection:

*1. What attitudes to work are displayed within the school setting?*

*2. What attitudes to work do our staff and students see outside the school setting?*

#### Strategies:

*1. How could respect for the dignity of work and service be better promoted within the school culture?*

*2. What opportunities are there within the curriculum to promote greater respect for work and service?*