

**CALL CHURCH ACTION ON
LABOUR AND LIFE**

“NO FUTURE WITHOUT GOOD WORK!”

Prayers, liturgical material, discussion plans

(to be developed, here some first examples)

Confessing hardship in society

Lord,
You know the hardship of our society in
business matters, in employment and wages.
Our world is devoted to produce and consume,
to earn and possess, to draw from earth, soil and
human effort everything that can be drawn.

As we ourselves are actors or victims of this
business, we beg your forgiveness for our lack
of sensitivity to others. We don't show the
goodness and generosity you are showing us.

Your justice and your Kingdom are neglected
in our professional lives as in our private lives.
We are hard towards our neighbours,
as we learn competition and domination.

We do not yet understand that you deliver us
from our debts and compulsions in our Lord
Jesus, who shared and transformed our life, with
its crying, dying and calling.

Give us, Lord, your sensitivity and spirit,
the firmness and lightness of your grace.
Amen

Old prayer for a day of work

Almighty God,
We thank you for the work of this day.

May we find gladness
in all its toil and difficulty,
its pleasure and success,
and even in its failure and sorrow.

May we look always away from ourselves
and see the need of the world.

Give us, Lord, the will and strength to bring
the gift of gladness to others,
so that with them we stand
to bear the burden and heat of the day.

May we offer you the praise of work well done.
Amen.

Prayer for people in uncertainty

Lord,
You are the spring of life,
in your light we see the light.

Therefore, we pray for strength
for those who are vulnerable and weak,
those who are stressed and
those who are tired.
We pray for those who are
oppressed and without rights.

Lord,
Give strength and hope to people in uncertainty.
Give your love to those who are feeling
that nobody cares for them.

Lord,
Help us to do what we can
for those who are exploited,
who feel that they are worthless.

Help us to show that everyone is equal,
everyone is precious, everyone is needed.
Give us strength to uncover the issues
of bad conditions in working life,
of very insecure jobs.

We also pray for governments, parliaments
and political leaders:
Open their eyes to people living in uncertainty.
Give them wisdom and courage
to make appropriate decisions improving
employment and working conditions.

Lord,
You are the spring of life,
In your light we see the light.
Amen

Prayer on unequal working life

Lord,

Today we commit to you our concerns relating to labour and life, to people in employment ... or looking for employment!

We present to you the uneasy feelings of those with too much work, with overtime and with secure earnings, and the suffering of those with no work and no chance of any real job.

We confess before you those imbalances in jobs, the lack of sharing in employment, the hardness of too short jobs, and the pain of unemployed looking for an earning.

We also confess to you that in our society wealth is not shared with justice. And we present to you the uneasy feelings of leaders constrained to generate more profitability and to deny human dignity to their employees.

We are thankful before you, Lord, for all efforts of support and creativity benefitting to people with no secure job. We thank you for services, charities, organisations and parishes, and also groups of friends or volunteers, of neighbours or colleagues, people of good will who feel responsible for the quality of working life.

Lord,

You invite each of us to be creative in seeking solutions. Hear our prayer, our devotion, our commitment to serve you in our most vulnerable sisters and brothers, our will to make things change.

We commit to you, Lord, those for whom we try to do something, and those for whom we feel powerless.

Come and heal our society from the burning evil of greedy investment and indecent employment.

Lord, come soon, we pray.

Amen

St. Theresa blessing

May peace be within you today!

May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be.

May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith.

May you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you.

May you be content knowing that you are a child of God.

Let His presence settle into your bones and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, and to bask in the sun. It is there for each and every one of you. Amen

Irish blessing

May there always be work
For your hands to do...
May your purse always hold
A coin or two...

May the sun always shine
on your window pane...
May a rainbow be certain
to follow the rain...

May the hand of friend
Always be near you...
May God fill your heart
With gladness to cheer you...

And until we meet again,
May God hold you
In the palm of his hand.
Amen

Discussion plan for an evening in a youth group

Discuss:

Let everyone in the group answer the following:

- What kind of a work will you have as an adult? Tell about the profession of your dreams.
- Is it realistic for you? What does it take to get there?

Valuation exercise

Imagine an invisible line on the floor: **Fully agree - - - - - Do not agree at all**

Where do you want to take place on the line when you hear the following sentences?

“The meaning of life is to work”

“I will take any job at all”

“The salary doesn’t matter”

“If I have to, there is no problem for me to move to another country to get a job”

Brainstorm

Make two lists on the board:

Good jobs - / - Bad jobs

Discuss: What makes a job a bad job?

Valuation exercise – four corners (ask if they want to explain why they make their choice of corner)

What is “good work”?

1. Creative and rewarding work
2. Work that means I can financially support myself
3. Work for a good cause
4. Something else, namely....

What is the most important attribute of a job?

1. A good salary
2. A minimum risk of accidents and injuries
3. Good colleagues
4. Something else, namely....

Does God call people to all kinds of professions and jobs?

1. Sure, he calls people to be carpenters, cleaners and pastors
2. No, God’s calling only concerns ministries in churches; pastors, deacons etc.
3. God calls people to caring work, health care, school teaching, church ministries
4. Something else, namely....

What is most important with a “secure” work?

1. High safety standards
2. Long term employment contract
3. The existence of labour unions and/or safety officers to turn to
4. Something else, namely....

Discuss:

What is important for a good life?

Do you have to work?

How much should you work?

Read Matthew 20,1-15

This is, first of all, a parable which tells us that it is never too late to come to God, but maybe it also says something about working life and fair payment.

Discuss:

What does the parable tell about work and justice in the working conditions?

How could this be translated to modern times? What would the workers in a factory or other working places say today?

Browse the Bible; use a computer: Are there more Bible verses concerning work, salaries and equality?

Group work about balance in life

Read Exodus 20,8-11

Reformulate the commandment “Remember the Sabbath day” in your own words.

What does it mean? Do we really need this commandment?

What does this commandment say about good work and bad work?

Formulate a commandment (the eleventh) about good work

Biblical references

(two or three to be developed with reflections + one as bibliodrama)

Basic vision: God on the side of the poor and oppressed

Ex 20:2

I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

Deut 24:14-15

If you hire poor people to work for you, don't hold back their pay, whether they are Israelites or foreigners who live in your town. Pay them their wages at the end of each day, because they live in poverty and need the money to survive. If you don't pay them on time, they will complain about you to the LORD, and he will punish you.

Amos 5:24

Let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!

Matt 5:6

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Matt 18:11

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

Matt 25:40

Jesus: Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.

Psalms 145:15

The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. = The promise of fullness of life for everyone holds true – for that reason we may act faithfully and accordingly.

Some more references from the Bible

Exodus 1

The big story about precarious work

Matt 7,12

“The golden rule” – useful also when it is about good and bad work

Matt 11,28-30

A promise to the worker, both in good and bad work

Matt 20,1-15

A parable that tells us that it is never too late to come to God, but maybe it also says something about working life and fair payment

Luke 6,38

Give to others, and God will give to you. Indeed, you will receive a full measure, a generous helping, poured into your hands — all that you can hold. The measure you use for others is the one that God will use for you.

Philip. 4,10-20

The church as the good example – The Philippians' concern about Paul

1 Tim 5,18

The worker is worthy of his wages – even in church

Hebr 13,2

Take care of everyone

Jakobus 5,4

And now, you rich people, listen to me!... You have not paid any wages to those who work in your fields. Listen to their complaints! The cries of those who gather in your crops have reached the ears of God.