

Statements on work

Church teaching on the dignity of the worker, and what makes a just wage.

"Profits should not be regarded as solely of interest to managers or shareholders, but as a source of social dividend in which others have a right to benefit."

The Common Good 92, Bishops' Conference of England and Wales 1996.

"Wealthy owners of the means of production and employers must never forget that both divine and human law forbid them to squeeze the poor and wretched for the sake of gain or to profit from the helplessness of others."

Rerum Novarum 17.1

"As regards protection of this world's good, the first task is to save the wretched workers from the brutality of those who make use of human beings as mere instruments for the unrestrained acquisition of wealth."

Rerum Novarum 43

"Care must be taken, therefore, not to lengthen the working day beyond a man's capacity. How much time there must be for rest depends upon the type of work, the circumstances of time and place and, particularly, the health of the workers."

Rerum Novarum 43

Identity, meaning and worth

"The basis for determining the value of human work is not primarily the kind of work being done, but the fact that the one who is doing it is a person."

Laborem Exercens 6.4

"Let Christians realise the importance of their work, not only in terms of earthly progress, but also in the development of the Kingdom to which we are called through the power of the Spirit and the word of the Gospel."

Laborem Exercens 27.6

"..rich employers must not treat their workers as though they were their slaves, but must reverence them as people who are their equals in personal

dignity ... what is truly shameful and inhuman is to misuse people as instruments for gain and to value them only as so much mere energy and strength."

Rerum Novarum 17

"Work is for people not people for work. Everyone should be able to draw from work the means of providing for his (or her) life and that of his (or her) family, and of serving the human community."

Catechism 2428

"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."

Catechism 2432

"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 ... Agreement between the parties is not sufficient to justify morally the amount to be received in wages."

Catechism of the Catholic Church 2434

"It happens too often that workers are reduced to the level of being slaves to their own work. This is by no means justified by the so-called economic laws ... Applying their time and their strength to their employment with a due sense of responsibility, they should also all enjoy sufficient rest and leisure to cultivate their familial, cultural, social and religious life."

Gaudium et Spes 67.2

"God gave humanity intelligence, sensitivity and the power of thought – tools with which to finish and perfect the work God began. Every worker is to some extent a creator – whether artist, craftsman, executive, labourer or farmer. When work is done in common – when hope, hardship, ambition and joy are shared – it brings together and firmly unties the wills, minds and hearts of people."

Populorum Progressio

Technology

"... in some instances, technology can cease to be a man's ally and become almost his enemy, as when the mechanisation of work 'supplants' him, taking away all personal satisfaction and the incentive to creativity and responsibility, when it deprives many workers of their previous employment, or when, through exalting the machine, it reduces man to the status of its slave."

Laborem Exercens 5.3