

LABOR AND FAITH OUTREACH PROJECT
LABOR DAY 2022 RESOURCES
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Will your faith community honor workers impacted by COVID this Labor Day? We can help

Earlier this year, our nation surpassed one million deaths from COVID-19 since the pandemic's breakout in the early months of 2020. This solemn landmark makes Labor Day 2022 a special opportunity to acknowledge and offer gratitude for the millions of American frontline and essential workers who were particularly impacted by this disease due to increased exposure on the workplace.

We encourage Maine faith communities to acknowledge these workers this Labor Day 2022.

Many of these workers belong in our faith communities and gather at worship. Faith leaders across our state have already presided over funeral services for many who died from COVID including workers.

When the epidemic began, there were no vaccines. There was a lack of protective clothing including face masks, and shortages of accurate testing. Many workers were isolated from their families for weeks at a time when exposed to the virus. Hundreds of thousands contracted COVID from their work. Tens of thousands died from the virus and many still live with remaining symptoms of long-term COVID. Many were economically devastated and countless more still grieve the loss of loved ones.

We encourage local faith communities to take the opportunity to honor Labor Day this year by focusing worship time that week to the topic of workers lost or hurt due to the pandemic.

Faith expressions of recognition and gratitude can be included in preaching, common prayers, and other rituals unique to particular faith expressions. Utilizing newsletters, bulletins, and other social media, faith leaders can further educate their congregations on the need to acknowledge these workers.

We have resources to provide, including:

- **Preaching resources** based on the Scripture readings found for Sunday September 4th in The Roman Catholic Lectionary, The Common Lectionary, and the Torah portion for the Sabbath.
- **Suggested prayers** to be included in your worship service
- Data and information for inclusion in your preaching, church bulletins or other ways you communicate with your parishioners or congregants.
- **Speakers** who were "on the job" facing these hazards during the pandemic. These speakers can be available for your worship service or for gatherings such as coffee and doughnuts following worship.

For more information or assistance with this 2022 Labor Day recognition, please contact Michael Seavey Faith/Labor Liaison for the Maine AFL-CIO. He can help you approach your faith leaders with this request. Mike can be reached at (207) 212-1477 and his email address is mike@maineaflcio.org

**Labor in the Pulpit 2022:
Honoring Workers Impacted by Covid Pandemic
Resource Sheet #2
The Teachings of the Roman Catholic Church**

Pope Pius XI, Quadragesimo Anno, #83, 1931

"For as nature induces those who dwell in close proximity to unite into municipalities, so those who practice the same trade or profession, economic or otherwise constitute as it were fellowships or bodies. These groupings, autonomous in character, are considered if not essential to civil society at least a natural accompaniment thereof."

The Second Vatican Council

"Among the basic rights of the human person must be counted the right of freely founding labor unions. These unions should be truly able to represent the workers and to contribute to the proper arrangement of economic life. Another such right is that of taking part freely in the activity of these unions without fear of reprisal." **Gaudium et Spes, #68, 1965**

Recent Papal Statements on Labor Unions

"Workers have the right to form associations for the purpose of defending their vital interests . . . The experience of history teaches that the organizations of this type are an indispensable element of social life, especially in modern industrialized societies."

"Catholic social teaching . . . hold that unions are . . . indeed a mouthpiece for the struggle for social justice, for the just rights of working people in accordance with their individual professions . . . It is characteristic of work that it first and foremost unites people. In this consists its social power: the power to build a community . . . It is clear that, even if it is because of their work needs that people unite to secure their rights, their union remains a constructive factor of social order and solidarity, and it is impossible to ignore it." **Pope St. John Paul II, On Human Work #49, 1981**

"The Church...has long recognized the right of workers to form associations. The purpose of such associations is to promote social justice by defending the vital interests of workers and by contributing to the common good. **Pope St. John Paul II, Address to Workers in Sydney, Australia November 26, 1986**

"Governments, for reasons of economic utility, often limit the freedom or the negotiating capacity of labour unions. The repeated calls issued within the Church's social doctrine, beginning with **Rerum Novarum**, for the promotion of workers' associations that can defend their rights must therefore be honoured today even more than in the past, as a prompt and far-sighted response to the urgent need for new forms of cooperation at the international level, as well as the local level." **Pope Benedict XVI, Charity in Truth #25, 2009**

"There is no good society without a good union, and there is no good union that isn't reborn every day in the peripheries, that doesn't transform the rejected stones of the economy into corner stones," **Pope Francis in papal audience June 28, 2017**

See also **Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church: Part 2, Chapter 6** presents the core of Catholic Teaching on Human Work. Paragraphs #301-307 focus particularly on the rights of workers and the place of labor unions.

https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html