



## Most Rev. John R. Manz

### Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago

Over Labor Day weekend, I invite you to reflect on the tenets of our faith that proclaim that all workers have sacred worth and, therefore, they deserve dignity and respect. Catholic Social Teaching further instructs us that all workers should have safe work conditions and family-sustaining wages. Yet, as we know, the income gap between the wealthiest and poorest among us continues to grow, resulting in many of our hard-working families living below the poverty line.

In response to the growing income inequality around us, Pope Francis recently instructed, *"We can no longer wait to solve the structural causes of poverty, to heal our society from a sickness that can only lead to new crises. Markets and financial speculation should not enjoy absolute autonomy. Unless we solve the problems of the poor we shall not resolve the world's problems. We need programs, mechanisms and processes that lead to a better distribution of resources, the creation of jobs and all-around promotion of those who are excluded."*

Over this holiday weekend I hope you will reflect on how we as Catholics are called upon to end the exploitation of workers. The Archdiocese is proud to be a partner with Arise Chicago, a 28 year-old interfaith organization that boasts Msgr. Jack Egan as one of its co-founders. Arise teaches workers their rights, builds leadership skills, and advocates for public policy changes – all of which transform lives and communities. [www.arisechicago.org](http://www.arisechicago.org) This weekend, in partnership with the Chicago Federation of Labor (CFL), Arise Chicago has prepared speakers in over 100 services, lifting up the sacred link between work and faith.

As a part of our Labor Day reflection, we need to turn away from the idolatry of wealth that can deceive us into believing that we are self-sufficient, and instead embrace the truth that we are all divinely connected to each other. We cannot live in a world without car mechanics, shoe salespersons, teachers, hotel workers, grocery store clerks, nurses, etc. I invite you to honor through your prayers and actions the dignity of workers, especially those who you encounter in your daily interactions. Reflect on how each of us, through our work, contribute our unique God-given gifts to the common good of humanity. Hold in prayer all of those longing for jobs and all of those who labor under poor working conditions. Our interconnectedness in faith and our dependence on each other in life give us a lot to celebrate together! Blessed Labor Day!

Sincerely,

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