



CARITAS ZAMBIA COMMEMORATES LABOUR DAY: THE ENDURING WISDOM OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING ON WORK

Tomorrow, as Zambia joins the global community in observing Labour Day, Caritas Zambia reflects deeply on the profound significance of work in human life and societal well-being. Rooted in the teachings of our Catholic faith, we recognize labour not merely as a means of economic sustenance, but as a fundamental dimension of human dignity, a participation in God's creative work, and a pathway to personal fulfillment and the common good.

Down through the centuries, the Church has consistently championed the rights and dignity of workers. Over a century ago, in his landmark encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891), **Pope Leo XIII** courageously addressed the pressing social issues arising from the industrial revolution. He firmly asserted the inherent dignity of the worker, emphasizing the right to just wages, fair working conditions, rest, and the formation of workers' associations. His words resonated with a powerful call for justice, reminding society that human beings are not mere instruments of production, but individuals endowed with inalienable rights. Pope Leo XIII's insistence on the state's role in safeguarding these rights laid a crucial foundation for modern labor ethics.

In more recent times, **Pope John Paul II**, through his encyclical *Laborem Exercens* (1981), offered a profound and comprehensive reflection on the meaning of human work. He eloquently stated that work is not just *for* man, but also *by* man, emphasizing its subjective dimension – the realization of human potential and the contribution to the human community. Pope John Paul II highlighted the priority of labor over capital, reminding us that the human person is the central agent and ultimate purpose of all economic activity. He stressed the importance of solidarity among workers, the right to participate in the life of the workplace, and the spiritual dimension of human labor, seeing it as a participation in Christ's own redemptive work.

As Caritas Zambia, inspired by these enduring teachings, we stand in solidarity with all workers in Zambia. We recognize the challenges many face: issues of fair wages, safe working environments, job security, and the opportunity for dignified livelihoods. We echo the calls of Pope Leo XIII and Pope John Paul II for a society that prioritizes the human person in the world of work, ensuring that the rights and dignity of every worker are respected and upheld.

On this Labour Day, we urge all stakeholders – government, employers, workers' organizations, and civil society – to work collaboratively in building a just and equitable labor landscape in Zambia. Let us commit to creating conditions where work truly becomes a means of human flourishing, contributing to the integral development of every individual and the progress of our nation. May our commemoration of this day be marked by a renewed commitment to the principles of justice, solidarity, and the inherent dignity of all who labor.

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