

Your Faith WORKS



Newsletter of Interfaith Worker Justice

Summer 2015

Praying for Walmart Workers

Thank you for continuing to stand by, and with, Walmart workers who are courageously fighting for their right to a living wage and to be treated with respect and dignity at work.

In early June, hundreds of individuals shared prayers of support, hope and encouragement as Walmart workers and their allies travelled to Bentonville, Ark. for the company's annual shareholder meeting.

The presence of OUR Walmart leaders in Bentonville blanketed the massive gathering of Walmart executives and shareholders with a spirit of accountability and responsibility to those on whose backs the company's profits are built.

Earlier this year, OUR Walmart leaders successfully pushed Walmart to begin addressing its immorally low pay and bump workers wages up – a small bit. Without guarantee of hours though, the proposed increase falls short of what workers need to provide decent lives for themselves and their families. They deserve pay that honors their human dignity: \$15 an hour and full-time, consistent hours.

We truly believe Walmart man-

agers and executives have the capacity for compassion, and we pray (and push) they experience a conversion of heart.

Your prayers (and support) are needed now more than ever. On April 13, Walmart suddenly shut down five stores in Texas, California, Florida and Oklahoma – leaving 2,200 workers shocked and unemployed. On April 20, employees from the Pico Rivera, Calif. store filed a complaint with the National Labor Relations Board charging "Walmart's action was intended to target the Pico Rivera store, which has been the focal point of activity by Associates for better working conditions."

We won't let big corporations bully workers who are leading the fight for respect and dignity at work. The struggle continues until these workers are reinstated and their cries for justice are heard.

As corporate executives and wealthy shareholders celebrate the "successes" this past year, let us pray for – and act with – courage as we stand with the thousands of Walmart workers who are on the front lines of the struggle for dignity and respect.



Thank you for sending your prayers...

- May we all learn to share so that all have enough.
- Thank you, compassionate God, for the courage and vision of the Walmart workers and may their integrity touch the hearts of the shareholders.
- May God open the hearts of the Walton Family to see that they, and all of us, are called to build a just world here and now. May all Walmart workers feel supported in their struggle for justice.
- My sincerest thoughts and prayers go out to all Walmart workers and their families. We are all an American family and when one of our family members suffers, we all suffer. Keep the faith.
- May the shareholders and the Board of Directors of Walmart remember that whatever they do to workers, they do to God.

Labor Day Reflections on Work, Dignity and Human Life

By Bishop Howard Hubbard

As we approach our national observance of Labor Day, it is well to remember the importance of work in our lives. Faith tells us that work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of contemporary participation in God's plan of salvation and of being co-creators with God in bringing the world to its fulfillment. It is a means of growing, sharing and enhancing one's own life and that of one's family and the wider community.

Because work is so essential for the well being of the individual, the family and society, the dignity of work must be protected and the basic rights of workers are to be respected: the right to productive work, to a decent and fair wage, to safe working conditions, to organize and join unions, to private property and to economic initiative.

Labor Day 2015 shows some gains throughout the last few years: more states or cities have raised the minimum wage and passed laws granting workers paid sick time.

However, the situation continues to remain dire for far too many

working men and women. Millions of workers are struggling to make ends meet and formerly middle class folks are now feeding their families with food stamps. Income inequality has grown significantly in the last 30 years, which has led researchers to conclude that the United States is the most economically unequal country in the advanced world. There is also the problem of wage theft.

Unfortunately, far too often, the debate over economic policy tends to neglect the human, social and moral dimensions of economic life, and that is why the formulation and implementation of solutions to our economic woes cannot be left solely to the technicians, special interest groups and market forces. For what is at stake is not really economic theories or political programs, but human life.

Behind every statistic and chart that seeks to define the problem lie individual tragedies and families trying to cope with unemployment and poverty. Hence, our present crisis is a moral as well as an economic one and must be addressed as such. May Labor Day prompt us to do so.

The Most Rev. Howard Hubbard is the retired bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Albany. He currently serves on the board of Interfaith Worker Justice and co-chairs the NY State Labor Religion Coalition.


This Labor Day let us lift up the dignity and intrinsic value of working people by bearing witness to the struggle for a living wage and for dignity and respect on the job. Take part in this year's Worker in the Pulpits. To learn how, visit www.iwj.org or email cjunia@iwj.org.

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The Pope and Human Dignity

By Adam DeRose

In September, Pope Francis is set to visit the U.S. to address Congress and the United Nations ahead of the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia. At IWJ, we're thrilled the Pope is coming, and we think it's an important time to amplify his repeated calls to honor human dignity... for all of God's children.

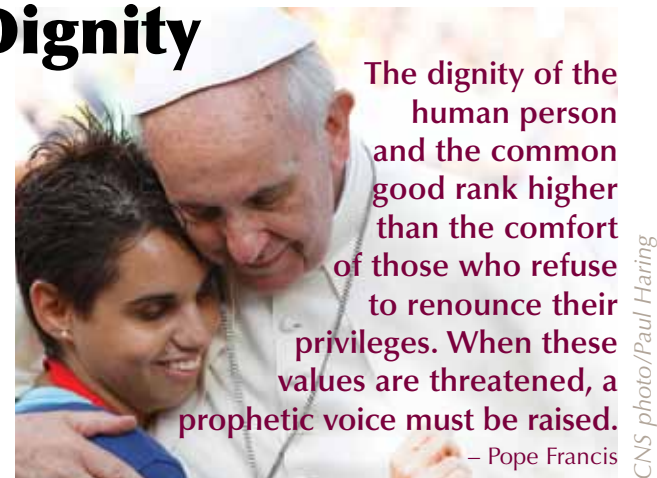
Pope Francis' unabashed regard for human dignity and unapologetic disdain for the forces that hinder our ability to thrive on God's good Earth have been a breath of fresh air and a welcome recalibration of our society's moral compass.

The Pope's love for humanity is especially apparent in all his declarations relating to economic inequality and the challenges facing working

people everyday. When the Pope calls out the sins of Capitalism, he does so in an effort to challenge a system that creates disparity between the rich and the poor, and by consequence creates a "throw-away culture."

He reminds us that when we advocate against austerity or fight for a living wage, we're taking down the barriers to a quality of life that gives dignity and hope to all.

As we look forward to the Papal visit, I invite you to continue lifting up the dignity inherent in all people and take special care to advocate for economic and worker policies that allow us all to live well.



The dignity of the human person and the common good rank higher than the comfort of those who refuse to renounce their privileges. When these values are threatened, a prophetic voice must be raised.

– Pope Francis

CNS photo/Paul Haring

Adam is IWJ's online organizer. During the last three (-plus!) years, he has worked tirelessly to motivate and engage people in the work, through his posts and writings on the IWJ website, Twitter, Facebook and other online platforms. In July, Adam will move on to pursue graduate studies at Arizona State University. We are grateful for all that he's done for IWJ and the movement.

The Hand that Feeds: Real to Reel Victory

We are really excited to partner with Jubilee Films – the production company behind the critically acclaimed documentary, *The Hand That Feeds*. The film follows the courageous – and victorious – efforts of shy sandwich-maker Mahoma López to organize his coworkers to fight abusive conditions at a popular New York restaurant chain.

Risking deportation and the loss of their livelihood, Mahoma and his coworkers team up with a diverse crew of innovative young organizers and take the unusual step of forming their own independent union, launching themselves on a journey that will test the limits of their resolve. Through a special program supported by the Ford Foundation, IWJ affiliates can obtain public screening licenses of the film.

Please check www.iwj.org or www.Thehandthatfeeds.com for screening schedules in your area.

If you are interested in hosting a public screening, please contact Cathy Junia at cjunia@iwj.org.



IWJ Executive Director Rudy López and Hand that Feeds Director Rachel Lears at a recent Chicago screening of the film.

IWJ Interns: Where are they now?

With the support of IWJ allies, donors and partners, we're excited to welcome another group of summer interns at our national office and with IWJ affiliates across the country.

For more than 15 years, IWJ has been blessed with the opportunity to be part of the formation and development of some of the most inspiring and dedicated leaders in our communities.

It gives all of us great joy to see and hear about all the great work our summer program alumni are engaged in. A few weeks ago, for instance, we came across an announcement about Summer 2011 alum, Sarah Hedgis, and her new

post as Program Director at the Episcopal Mission Center. The Episcopal Mission Center is an urban retreat and Episcopal social justice center in Philadelphia. Sarah hopes her work will help transform the lives of people of faith through cultivating authentic relationships and learning about important social justice issues.

Sarah is also a candidate for Holy Orders in the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania and will be ordained this summer. Did you go through IWJ's Seminary Summer or Summer Internship program? We'd love to know what you're up to now and how the summer program helped shape your vocation. Please e-mail info@iwj.org to share your story.

A Field of Hope and Courage

Our friends at the **Labor-Religion Coalition of New York State**, who have been at the center of the effort to raise the minimum wage in New York, recently got huge news! Governor Andrew Cuomo appointed a Wage Board that could increase the minimum wage for fast food workers in New York to \$15 an hour. The Coalition is bringing clergy and people of faith to the Wage Board hearings, helping local faith leaders write and send letters to local editors and organizing an online petition. If you believe fast food workers deserve \$15 an hour tell the Wage Board now at bit.ly/NYWageBoard and be sure to follow the Labor-Religion Coalition on social.

And more good news from Iowa... After a two-year campaign led by worker-members of the **Center for Worker Justice of Eastern Iowa**, lawmakers passed a county-wide ordinance for a county-issued government identification card (a community ID) for all residents regardless of immigration status. Without such IDs, thousands of residents often face obstacles cashing paychecks, using debit cards, renting an apartment, purchasing medication. The new ordinance is the first of its kind in the Midwest.

Every time we welcome a new affiliate, we get excited about the opportunity to celebrate more wins for working people. **Don Bosco Worker Center** is a very strong and dynamic organization in Port Chester, NY, that applies Catholic Social Teaching to uplift the dignity of workers. Don Bosco joined IWJ's worker center network in May. We look forward to sharing their victories in the future!

Finding Justice

CHANGE
DIGNITY
FAITH
FIFTEEN

LIVING WAGE
ORGANIZE
RESPECT
SAFETY

SOLIDARITY
STRIKE
WORKER
JUSTICE

Be among the first 10 people to find all 12 words and win a prize!

Take a photo of your completed puzzle and email to info@iwj.org.

Answers and winners will be posted in the next *Faith Works*.

Answers to puzzle in last issue

Across

2. Mary Kenny OSullivan
4. Bill Clinton
11. New York City
12. Seattle
13. Methodist
14. Martin Luther King Jr
15. Theodore Roosevelt

Down

1. Workers Memorial Day
3. A Philip Randolph
5. Catholic Worker
6. New York Daily Sentinel
7. Amnesty Day
8. John Lewis
9. Sanitation
10. William Haywood
11. New Jersey

Winner of last issue's puzzle is Br. Anthony Zuba, Boston, MA!

K F W Q L F X W H L H V B K Y H O I X L J N V N R
C T V S F Z U I C H I W S K M B K T K O B H L N G
W N F V N S H P H I C M B W D R X M A C M O O H R
U Y L P A K O U Y E A T O G G H M B C Y B R N B Y
K F X R J B L A Q M T U R S N I K W C T O E W D L
W O R K E R H T R T S L Y H O I X X P E K S K P B
K O Z P C T S P Q R R D D A G L V G W F I P O E S
E G S F Q L S W V I R J V K P O Y I Q A D E F I M
F J K G J S R W U F E Q T I U Z T D L S E C Q U B
V A O N S I A T L G J N V F E G I M E V U T N F M
W U I L C L Z E Z T I L I H F T R D C E V J M H A
G Q R T R B W C Y W Z G L W R R A F W M L S C H T
U C U F H W T E M H J F J B Y E D P I G C T E S E
H J W U R Y Z D I G N I T Y J N I E R F S B A T R
S N Z Z D I P F J E J O S U B Y L D D S T P X Y E
U Z D Q N T C W K L E Q S I G K O F E N K E Y R X
S S M A G K O P O C W T S F E V S L N F B Y E N R
L R G Z X J O Q G E I Z E G N A H C F Q P X R N O
B R F A D W J S K C Q S V P M A O V W U X J V K U
O L M B E K P I E B N U I K W R G C U H O Z Y T S
J Q F Z U S R W D U V T Z P I J Y U A W Y E Y H F
A R J P O T J A X O E F O F K E S P W B N J O L H
L H K G S J O G B I H L N J U C H M S X J R A Q I
S L D Z J R V E U T Q B C W D A C S N P O D B T D
N V A V E V G Q L G Q O P D Z T N C F A C M D N F

Living Wage Certification: It's a GO in Durango!

Maureen Maliszewski is an active member of the Unitarian Universalists Fellowship of Durango, Colo. and the former chair of the Social Justice Committee. She, the Social Justice Committee, and other community activists recently launched a Living Wage Certification program.

In November of 2012, Dr. Ron Garst, a fellow congregational member, gave a Sunday service presentation on growing economic inequality in the U.S, an issue on which he'd taught, written and lectured for decades. In their desire to address the issue, the Committee did some research and discovered that in 2008 La Plata County, the county in which Durango is located, had created a

"Master Plan" that recommended living wages for workers.

Maureen, her UU colleagues and other community activists formed *Thrive!* in 2013, a coalition of citizens in La Plata County, Colorado who care about the long-term economic health and social well-being of our community. *Thrive!*'s mission is to enhance the quality of life in La Plata County through fair and just wages for all.

Long-term, the group is interested in doing away with the state preemption, but it also wanted to do something to make a difference now. It decided to create a living wage certification program, which it calls an "Employer Recognition Program." *Thrive!* officially launched its

employer recognition program in November 2014.

The coalition, working with the Region 9 Economic Development District, calculated the 2014 rate, which goes until July 1, 2015 as \$12.40 per hour. As of April, 2015, 39 businesses had been certified as paying living wages and two more were "Aspiring Living Wage Employers," meaning that they want to pay living wages and pledge to move toward living wages during the next year.

On April 15, 2015, Jeff Furman, one of the founders of Ben and Jerry's ice cream and a strong supporter of the Living Wage Certification program in Ithaca, N.Y. led by the IWJ-affiliated Tompkins County Workers



Center, spoke about the certification program and how paying living wages helped Ben & Jerry's succeed.

Visit www.thriveplata.org to learn more about the program. To start a program in your community, contact Janel Bailey (Jbailey@iwj.org) and download a free Living Wage Certification Toolkit at <http://bit.ly/livingwagecert>.

She Walked the Walk

In March, the social justice movement lost a trailblazer and stalwart with the passing of political scientist and social activist, Jean V. Hardisty (69). Along with many others, we mourned the loss of a wise and generous friend and ally.

In her lifetime, Jean wrote numerous papers and gave countless of talks on the American right wing. She founded the Political Research Associates (PRA) – formerly Midwest Research – a social justice, right-wing watch group, in 1981 in Chicago. Under her leadership, PRA became one of the foremost critical voices pushing back against systems of oppression and poverty.

Throughout her life, Jean was known to walk the walk and invest in organizations steeped in the struggle for political justice and human rights.

We will forever be grateful for Jean's wisdom and generosity, and we are committed to honoring her legacy through our work. For more about Jean, visit <http://www.jeanhardisty.com/>



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Many blessings to our friends who are observing Ramadan

Welcome to the IWJ Family!

As the late Bishop H.E. Luccock of the Episcopal Methodist Church once said: "No one can whistle a symphony. It takes an orchestra to play it." We know we can't do this important work on our own, and are grateful to every person who chooses to share his or her gifts and talents to help further the mission of IWJ.

We're especially thrilled to welcome these stellar additions to the IWJ Board:

Visit iwj.org to get to know other inspiring members of the IWJ board.



Patrick Carolan, Executive Director – Franciscan Action Network



The Rev. Michael Livingston, Executive Minister – The Riverside Church



David Moskowitz, Workers Compensation Attorney, Morgan & Morgan



Marcos Lucio Popovich, Program Fellow – Barr Foundation



Marilyn Sneiderman, Professor and Director of Center for Innovation in Worker Organization – Rutgers University

From the depth of need and despair, people can work *together*, can organize themselves to solve their *own* problems and fill their *own* needs with *dignity* and strength.

– Cesar Chavez

IWJ Affiliate Network

For detailed contact information, please visit www.iwj.org.

Interfaith Groups

Arkansas Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice – Little Rock, AR
Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE)—California – Los Angeles, CA
CLUE—LA – Los Angeles, CA
East Bay Faith Alliance for a Moral Economy – Oakland, CA
Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice in San Diego – San Diego, CA
Interfaith Council on Economics and Justice – San Jose, CA
IWJ-Colorado/FRESC for Good Jobs and Strong Communities – Denver, CO
Connecticut Center for a New Economy – New Haven – New Haven, CT
Connecticut Center for a New Economy – Hartford – Hartford, CT
D.C. Jobs with Justice—Interfaith Worker Justice of Greater Washington – Washington, DC
Interfaith Action of Southwest Florida – Immokalee, FL
DuPage Interfaith Worker Justice – Naperville, IL
Community, Faith and Labor Coalition – Indianapolis, IN
Interfaith Worker Justice of Kansas – Wichita, KS

Interfaith Worker Justice—NOLA – New Orleans, LA
Interfaith Worker Justice Southern Maine – Portland, ME
IWJ of Maryland – Baltimore, MD
Massachusetts Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice – Boston, MA
Interfaith Worker Justice—New Mexico – Santa Fe, NM
Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition – New York, NY
Labor-Religion Coalition – Latham, NY
Greater Binghamton Labor-Religion Coalition – Vestal, NY
Beloved Community Center – Greensboro, NC
Cincinnati Interfaith Committee on Worker Justice – Cincinnati, OH
Greater Columbus Jobs with Justice – Columbus, OH
Central Oklahoma Community Forum – Oklahoma City, OK
Religious Outreach Committee/Portland Jobs with Justice – Portland, OR
Springfield Solidarity Network/Jobs with Justice – Eugene, OR
Labor-Religion Coalition of Western Pennsylvania – Pittsburgh, PA
Philadelphia Area Jobs with Justice – Philadelphia, PA

Interfaith Worker Justice of East Tennessee – Knoxville, TN
O.U.R. Vanderbilt – Nashville, TN
Interfaith Coalition for Worker Justice of South Central Wisconsin – Madison, WI

Worker Centers

Winning our Wages Worker Center – Birmingham, AL
Arizona Worker Rights Center – Phoenix, AZ
Southside Workers Center – Tucson, AZ
Northwest Arkansas Workers' Justice Center – Springdale, AR
Pilipino Workers Center – Los Angeles, CA
Young Workers United – San Francisco, CA
South Florida Interfaith Worker Justice* – Miami, FL
Economic Justice Coalition – Athens, GA
Workers Center for Racial Justice – Chicago, IL
Center for Worker Justice of Eastern Iowa – Iowa City, IA
Food AND Medicine/Eastern Maine Worker Center – Brewer, ME
Southern Maine Workers' Center – Portland, ME
MassCOSH – Dorchester, MA
The Micah Center* – Grand Rapids, MI
Centro de Trabajadores Unidos en la Lucha – Minneapolis, MN
Greater Minnesota Worker Center – St. Cloud, MN
New Labor – New Brunswick, NJ

Damayan Migrant Workers Center – New York, NY
Restaurant Opportunity Center (ROC) of New York – New York, NY
Worker Justice Project – Brooklyn, NY
Tompkins County Workers' Center – Ithaca, NY
Don Bosco Workers, Inc. – Rochester, NY
Workers' Center of Central New York – Syracuse, NY
Western North Carolina Workers' Center – Marion, NC
Cincinnati Interfaith Workers Center – Cincinnati, OH
Workers' Interfaith Network – Memphis, TN
Workers' Dignity Project – Nashville, TN
Workers' Defense Project/Proyecto Defensa Laboral – Austin, TX
Fe Y Justicia Worker Center (formerly Houston Interfaith Worker Justice Center) – Houston, TX
Community to Community Development – Bellingham, WA
Madison Workers' Rights Center – Madison, WI
Voces de la Frontera – Milwaukee, WI

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* Both an Interfaith Group and Worker Center