



Current Issues in Prayer

October 2017

Welcome! The Pope invites people of different faiths to come together and pray:
That all workers may receive respect and protection of their rights, and that the unemployed may receive the opportunity to contribute to the common good.



Getting started:

I find a quiet place where I can prepare myself for prayer. I become conscious of what is happening inside me. While taking a deep breath, I become aware that God is looking at me and at those around me with love.



Short story:

Claire and Marica had not met for a long time since both were busy raising their newborns. Both had a baby at around the same time the year before. Now that it was spring and the day grew longer and warmer, they could meet at the playground. At one point, they discussed their plans to return to work. Claire explained how she benefitted from her entitled *unpaid leave* and took a full year out of work. Claire decided to raise her baby full time, even though this meant that the family would have to survive on reduced income. She was blessed to have an agreeable manager who respected her decision, kept contact with her, and even encouraged her to apply for a higher position when the call was out. Claire was so appreciative of this that she was eager to return to work and prove herself. However Marica had a different story to tell. Marica had requested three months *unpaid leave* but this was not approved. Even her wish for *telework* or reduced working hours were turned down. Her manager felt she would create a precedent if she had to accept any of the work arrangements Marica had proposed. Marica was expected to work full time like all her colleagues. Any different working conditions meant that someone else had to be employed to cover for her absence. The manager was ready to let her go if Marica persisted. Marica felt aggrieved. She had offered different options to balance work with family life and all were refused. She felt her manager was being very rigid. The truth was that Marica could not afford to lose her job because her income made a necessary contribution to the family's essentials. Against her wishes, she had to go back to work. Marica's story is not the only one. Many mothers find themselves having to make this hard choice. Many employers do not take into consideration the situations that mothers face when they have to go back to work.



Time to reflect:

What is the value that I attribute to work? Do I appreciate the importance of work in my life? Am I careful that I do not lose my job and that I see that I am respected in my work? Did I ever feel that my superiors do not respect my rights?



Let us pray:

Dear Lord, please help us to understand that work should be a means to achieving human dignity, and not a means of enhancing the economy.



Inspiration:

Work is sacred and gives dignity to human beings. Any person or entity that violates this reality, hurts humanity. Work supports the family, without which, the morale of persons and often the lives of children suffer. Like God who is constantly working, we are talented to work towards sustaining ourselves, our families and the growth of our nation.

Pope Francis. May 2013



Hands on:

I should reflect about how much my rights at work are being safeguarded. If they aren't, I try to find ways to improve my situation. Besides I try to find out if any of my acquaintances are looking for a job and I try to see whether I can be of help.