

International Solidarity Days – May 2019

May 1—International Workers’ Day



Also known as May Day, International Workers’ Day honors laborers and workers around the world whose daily work builds and maintains society, economic systems and supports families. Often toiling in obscurity, these workers feed, house and cloth their families, keeping the fabric of the family intact, nurturing the present generation and educating future generations. Workers have often worked in dangerous conditions, risking their health, injury on the job and sometimes even death in order to earn their daily bread. Since the late 1800’s workers in many countries have managed to organize themselves, making it possible for them to negotiate fair pay, reasonable working hours, healthcare and retirement benefits, and the right to vacation

time each year. However, many workers around the world still do not enjoy these hard-earned benefits. This day celebrates what can be achieved when workers ban together for the common good of all.

God of justice, we thank you for the brave men and women who have sacrifice so much in order to secure the rights of working men and women to a safe workplace, health and retirement benefits, a living wage and respect on the job. May we actively support the rights of workers to have a voice in the workplace. May all who are unemployed find work that recognizes their dignity and makes it possible for them to support themselves and their families.

May 15—The 88th Anniversary of *Quadragesimo Anno*

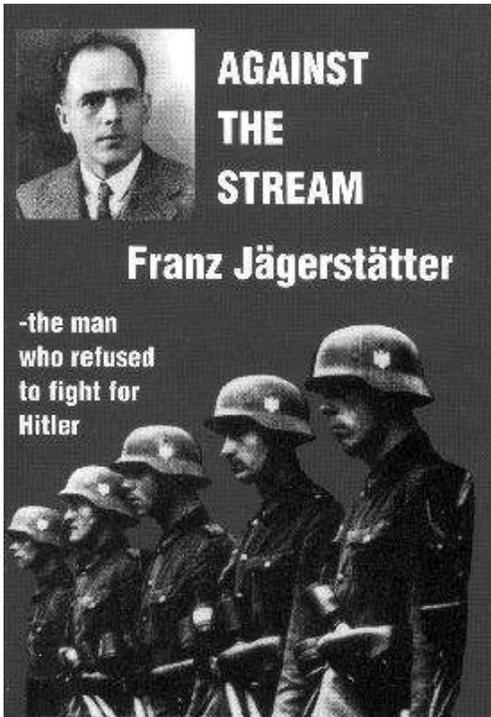


On May 15, 1931, Pope Pius XI published his encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* on the 40th anniversary of Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical *Rerum Novarum*. These two encyclicals address the emerging social realities of private property, the relationship between capital and labor, and the social order emerging out of the industrial revolution. It recognized the essential role of labor in the creation of capital, while at the same time acknowledging the role of capital in a flourishing economy. The right to work was recognized as an essential human right, upholding the dignity of the person by allowing each worker to earn a living and to support his/her family. These two documents also called on governments to take responsibility for the common good by providing the necessary infrastructure development necessary for a flourishing society through taxation and the equitable redistribution of goods and services. This balance in society still seems to escape us. When government becomes the support for the wealthy owners of capital at the expense of the poor and workers, the common good is no longer their

primary concern. Let us demand that governments everywhere live up to their responsibility to support the common good.

Holy One, we pray for people throughout the world who suffer because of the imbalance of power and wealth. We pray that governments protect the common good by ensuring living wages for all workers, providing access to healthcare, food and housing to all, and using their power of taxation to provide for the common good. We pray that the principles laid out in these two encyclicals will inspire creative action in meeting the needs of the poor and the needs of Earth, our common home.

May 21—Feast of Blessed Franz Jägerstätter



Franz Jägerstätter underwent a conversion to Gospel non-violence just as the Nazi party was coming to power in Germany. As a third order secular Franciscan, he refused to cooperate with the Nazi agenda and with its use of violence to intimidate and coerce others. When he was finally drafted into the German army, he refused military service. He believed that such service would be a form of complicity in the evils he was witnessing. This ordinary, humble working-class man took to heart the life and teachings of Jesus and was willing to stand up against the Nazi regime. On August 9, 1943 at the age of 33, Jägerstätter was executed by being beheaded for his stance of non-cooperation and non-violence. He left behind a wife and three daughters. Standing up to injustice, violence, hatred and bigotry is often costly. It can cost the person his/her career, family, friends, and even life itself. Yet, this is the kind of courage that following the Gospel demands. Once we have put our hand to the plow, we cannot look back. With persistence, faith, compassion and love, we are all called to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, no matter the cost. May Franz Jägerstätter's life inspire us in this time of darkness, injustice and hopelessness. May the Gospel move us to be bearers of light, justice and hope wherever we find ourselves.

Written by Dr Erna Putz
Translated by Michael Duggan

Loving God, we pray for world leaders. May they find non-violent solutions to difficulties that confront us, always taking into account the common good. May each of us rededicate ourselves to finding peaceful paths towards justice, recognizing that war and violence cannot bring peace. We know that peacemaking is the real call of the Gospel. May our hearts be converted to compassion and understanding so that we can be a presence of light, justice and hope in our Church and in our World.

May 22—International Day for Biological Diversity



**International Day for
Biological Diversity |**

diversity of ecosystems. Global climate change threatens healthy ecosystems and has already contributed to the extinction of many species. Unrestrained hunting, fishing, and poaching has devastated many animal populations, and deforestation and desertification have led to losses of plant and animal species at alarming rates.

How to Observe International Day for Biological Diversity

1. Start your own organic garden

This day celebrates the 26th anniversary honoring biodiversity. It is a day that recognizes that the health of the planet depends on the biodiversity of species, great and small. To maintain diversity of species, we know that we must also sustain and protect the

The change can take place right in your own backyard! However, not every kind of garden is suitable for any kind of environment. The key to a good organic garden is to replace invasive plants with native ones, eliminate hard surfaces that discourage growth, and refrain from using pesticides. Show off your own, native ecosystem.

2. Buy organic, sustainable food

Believe it or not, organic food is not just code for “expensive and weird-looking tomatoes.” Organic food has not been exposed to pesticides or fertilizers. And, although these are not necessarily harmful to humans in and of themselves, they can have negative impacts on the environment.

3. Conserve energy

By reducing your energy consumption, you minimize the amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere as a result of your activities. In addition, you reduce the demand for companies to disturb the environment in a search for fossil fuels. While individual humans do not bear the same responsibility for the environment as big corporations do, it’s still important for all of us to preserve life on this planet.

Creator God awaken us to the urgent groaning of Mother Earth and her creatures. Move us to action as we seek ways to preserve ecosystem diversity and the species diversity that these ecosystems make possible. Open our heart to the needs of all creatures so that we can protect and respect the biodiversity that makes our common home a reflection of your love, beauty and creativity.

May 24—Fourth Anniversary of *Laudato Si: On the Care of Our Common Home*



Laudato Si is the encyclical published in 2015 by Pope Francis in which he describes the dangerous climate change taking place in the world and the human attitudes and activities that are the primary causes of the environmental devastation that is occurring. In it, the pope calls all people of the world to reflect on how creation reveals the reality of divine love and how our sense of wonder at the mystery of creation is supported and inspired by the beauty and wonders that we experience. He calls for an appreciation for the interconnectedness of all beings—a concept he calls “integral ecology”. This linking of the care for the poor and the care of creation situates us within the whole of creation. We cannot truly care for Earth unless we also care for one another. We need to see ourselves as co-creators with God, and responsible for the sustainable

use of the gifts of creation for the common good. Our actions need to be rooted in this deep reverence and respect for all of creation. *Laudato Si* call us to reflect on how we contribute to this “throw away” culture and to take action toward sustainable use of the gifts of creation.

Holy One, thank you for the wonder of creation. Your love has revealed itself in every aspect of creation and has lifted us to the heights of wonder, awe, inspiration and illumination. Guide each of us as we examine how we have participated in the “throw away” culture of our time. As we grow in understanding, help us to change our lives, embracing simplicity, care for Earth and care for one another, especially the poor.