

Selected Quotes of Pope Francis by Subject

This document from the USCCB Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development is a compilation of helpful quotes and excerpts from speeches, messages, homilies, and audiences of Pope Francis. This informal compilation is not comprehensive; it does not cover every issue. This document is a work in progress and will be updated periodically. *Last updated: May 2016.*

How to Use This Document:

Quotes are sorted by subject. Subjects are in alphabetical order. The subject list in the Table of Contents, below, bookmarks to the corresponding section of the document.

Each quote in this document is followed by a parenthetical reference that includes the date (e.g. 6/5/13). Each date corresponds to an oral or written communication from Pope Francis that occurred on that date. When two communications occurred on the same date, the parenthetical reference includes date followed by subject (e.g. “3/28/13, Christm Mass” and “3/28/13, Prison for Minors”).

A list of Pope Francis’ communications by date appears on the last page of this document.

Example: the first quote in the section called “Poverty” is followed by a parenthetical reference that reads “(3/19/13)”. To determine the source for the quote, a reader who goes to the last page of the document will see that 3/19/13 refers to Pope Francis’ homily at his inaugural Mass, and can use the provided link to access the full text of the speech.

I address a strong appeal from my heart that the dignity and safety of the worker always be protected. (4/28/13, Regina Caeli)

Work is fundamental to the dignity of a person. Work, to use an image, "anoints" us with dignity, fills us with dignity, makes us similar to God, who has worked and still works, who always acts... (5/1/13)

I wish to extend an invitation to solidarity to everyone, and I would like to encourage those in public office to make every effort to give new impetus to employment, this means caring for the dignity of the person, but above all I would say do not lose hope... (5/1/13)

How many people worldwide are victims of this type of slavery, in which the person is at the service of his or her work, while work should offer a service to people so they may have dignity. I ask my brothers and sisters in faith and all men and women of good will for a decisive choice to combat trafficking in persons, which includes "slave labor." (5/1/13)

There is no worse material poverty, I am keen to stress, than the poverty which prevents people from earning their bread and deprives them of the dignity of work. (5/25/13)

It is true that the global crisis harms the young. I read last week the percentage of the young without work. Just think that we risk having a generation that has never worked, and yet it is through work that a person acquires dignity by earning bread. The young, at this moment, are in crisis. We have become somewhat accustomed to this throwaway culture: too often the elderly are discarded! But now we have all these young people with no work, they too are suffering the effects of the throwaway culture. We must rid ourselves of this habit of throwing away. No! The culture of inclusion, the culture of encounter, making an effort to bring everyone into society! (7/22/13, Journalists)

Where there is no work there is no dignity! ... [lack of work] is the result of a global decision, of an economic system which leads to this tragedy; an economic system centered on an idol called "money". (9/22/13, Workers)

It is hard to have dignity without work. This is your difficulty here. This is the prayer you were crying out from this place: "work", "work", "work". It is a necessary prayer. Work means dignity, work means taking food home, work means loving! (9/22/13, Workers)

A society open to hope is not closed in on itself, in the defense of the interests of the few. Rather it looks ahead from the viewpoint of the common good. And this requires on the part of all a strong sense of responsibility. There is no social hope without dignified employment for all. For this reason we must "continue to prioritise the goal of access to steady employment for everyone" or its maintenance for everyone (Benedict XVI, Encyclical [*Caritas in Veritate*, n. 32](#)). (9/22/13, Workers)

Unfortunately, especially when there is a crisis and the need is pressing, inhumane work increases, slave-labor, work without the proper security or respect for creation, or without respect for rest, celebrations and the family and work on Sundays when it isn't necessary. Work must be combined with the preservation of creation so that this may be responsibly safeguarded for future generations. (9/22/13, Workers)

Lord God look down upon us! Look at this city, this island. Look upon our families.
Lord, you were not without a job, you were a carpenter, you were happy.

Lord, we have no work.

The idols want to rob us of our dignity. The unjust systems want to rob us of hope.

Lord, do not leave us on our own. Help us to help each other; so that we forget our selfishness a little and feel in our heart the “we”, the we of a people who want to keep on going.

Lord Jesus, you were never out of work, give us work and teach us to fight for work and bless us all. In the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. (9/22/13, Workers)

The most serious of the evils that afflict the world these days are youth unemployment and the loneliness of the old. The old need care and companionship; the young need work and hope but have neither one nor the other, and the problem is they don't even look for them any more. They have been crushed by the present. You tell me: can you live crushed under the weight of the present? Without a memory of the past and without the desire to look ahead to the future by building something, a future, a family? Can you go on like this? This, to me, is the most urgent problem that the Church is facing. (10/1/13)

Work, in fact, directly concerns the human person, his life, his freedom and his happiness. The primary value of work is the good of the human person since it fulfills him as such, with his inner talents and his intellectual, creative and physical abilities. Hence the scope of work is not only profit and economics; its purpose above all regards man and his dignity . . . This dignity is wounded where work is lacking! Anyone who is unemployed or underemployed is likely, in fact, to be placed on the margins of society, becoming a victim of social exclusion. (3/20/14)

At the dawn of creation, God made man the steward of his handiwork and charged him to cultivate and protect it. Human labor is part of that creation and continues God's creative work. This truth leads us to consider work as both a gift and a duty. Indeed, labor is not a mere commodity but has its own inherent dignity and worth. (5/28/14)

I am deeply grateful to those of you who by your work and witness bring the Lord's consoling presence to people living on the peripheries of our society. This activity should not be limited to charitable assistance, but must also extend to a practical concern for human growth. Not just charitable assistance, but personal development. To assist the poor is good and necessary, but it is not enough. I encourage you to multiply your efforts in the area of human promotion, so that every man and every woman can know the joy which comes from the dignity of earning their daily bread and supporting their family. This dignity is presently under threat by a cult of money which leaves many people without work... We might say: “But Father, we are making sure that they are fed”. But this is not enough! The unemployed, whether men or women, must also sense the dignity which comes from providing for their household, of being breadwinners! I entrust this task to you. (8/16/14, Laity)

The fundamental right to employment should not be dismantled. This cannot be considered a variable dependent on financial and monetary markets. It is a fundamental good in regard to dignity (cf. *ibid.*), to the formation of a family, to the realization of the common good and of peace. (10/2/14)

Views that claim to increase profitability, at the cost of restricting the labor market, thereby creating new exclusions, are not in conformity with an economy at the service of man and of the common good, with an inclusive and participatory democracy. (10/2/14)

There is no worse material poverty than one that does not allow for earning one's bread and deprives one of the dignity of work. Youth unemployment, informality, and the lack of labor rights are not inevitable; they are the result of a previous social option, of an economic system that puts profit above man; if the profit is economic, to put it above humanity or above man, is the effect of a disposable culture that considers the human being in himself as a consumer good, which can be used and then discarded. (10/28/14)

Every worker, be he or not in the formal system of salaried work, has the right to fitting remuneration, to social security and to retirement coverage. Here there are cardboard <dweller>, recyclers, peddlers, seamstresses, artisans, fishermen, rural workers, builders, miners, recovered business laborers, all sorts of members of cooperatives and workers in popular jobs who are excluded from labor rights, who are denied the possibility of joining labor unions, who have no adequate and stable income. Today I want to join my voice to yours and support you in your struggle. (10/28/14)

Because the economic system discards people and now it is the young people's turn to be discarded, that is, unemployed. This is serious! "But there are works of charity, there are volunteers, there is Caritas, there is that center, there is that club that feeds...". The the problem is not eating, the problem is more serious, it is not being able to bring home bread, to earn it! And when you don't earn bread, you lose your dignity! This lack of work robs us of dignity. We have to fight for this, we must defend our dignity as citizens, as men, as women, as young people. This is the tragedy of our time. We must not remain silent. (3/21/15, Scampia)

I address a heartfelt appeal that the logic of profit not prevail, but rather that of solidarity and justice. At the center of every situation, especially work-related, should be the person and his or her dignity: that is why employment is a matter of justice, and it is an injustice not to have work! When people do not earn their bread, they lose their dignity! And this is the drama of our times, especially for young people, who, without work, have no prospects in their future and can so easily become prey to criminal organizations. Please, let us fight for this: the justice of work. (3/25/15)

You must take initiatives for young people, jobs, small things because, as you know, work gives dignity. Think about when a young person cannot find work, they don't have a sense of dignity and they suffer. I encourage you to search, to pray, to seek small things, small things especially for young people. (5/2/15, Pilgrims)

Freedom of labor. True freedom of labor means that man, in continuing the work of the Creator, helps the world rediscover its purpose: to be the work of God who, in the work performed, incarnates and extends the image of his presence in Creation and in human history. Too often, however, labor is subject to oppression on different levels: of one person over another; of new organizations of slavery which oppress the poorest; in particular, many women and children are subjected to an economy which forces them to work in degrading conditions that contradict the beauty and harmony of Creation. We must ensure that labor is not an instrument of alienation, but of hope and new life. In other words, that there is freedom of labor. (5/23/15)

The Bible tells us that God hears the cry of his people, and I wish to join my voice to yours in calling for the three "L's" for all our brothers and sisters: land, lodging and labor. I said it and I repeat it: these are sacred rights. It is important, it is well worth fighting for them. May the cry of the excluded be heard in Latin America and throughout the world. (7/9/15, Popular Movements)

There are millions of men and women and even children who are slaves to labor! At this time there are slaves, they are exploited, slaves to labor and this is against God and against the dignity of the human person! The obsession with economic profit and technical hyper-efficiency put the human rhythms of life at risk, for life has its human rhythms. . . . The greed of consumerism, which leads to waste, is an ugly virus which, among other things, makes us end up even more tired than before. It harms true labor and consumes life. Irregular rhythms of celebration often make victims of the young. (8/12/15)

Work — I repeat, in its many forms — is proper to the human person. It expresses the dignity of being created in the image of God. Thus, it is said that work is sacred. And thus, managing one's occupation is a great human and social responsibility, which cannot be left in the hands of the few or unladen onto some divinized "market". Causing the loss of jobs means causing serious harm to society. It makes me sad to see people

without work, who don't find work and don't have the dignity of bringing bread home. And I rejoice greatly when I see governments go to great lengths to find jobs and try to see to it that everyone has work. Work is sacred, work gives dignity to a family. We have to pray that no family is left without work. (8/19/15)

When work is detached from God's covenant with man and woman, and it is separated from its spiritual qualities, when work is held hostage by the logic of profit alone and human life is disregarded, the degradation of the soul contaminates everything: even the air, water, grass, food ... the life of society is corrupted and the habitat breaks down. And the consequences fall most of all on the poor and on poor families. The modern organization of work sometimes shows a dangerous tendency to consider the family a burden, a weight, a liability for the productivity of labour. But let us ask ourselves: what productivity? And for whom? (8/19/15)

At times those in charge are interested in managing individuals as a workforce, assembling and utilizing them or throwing them away on the basis of economic benefit. The family is a great workbench. (8/19/15)

In this Jubilee Year, I would also appeal to national leaders for concrete gestures in favor of our brothers and sisters who suffer from the lack of labor, land and lodging. I am thinking of the creation of dignified jobs to combat the social plague of unemployment, which affects many families and young people, with grave effects for society as a whole. Unemployment takes a heavy toll on people's sense of dignity and hope, and can only be partially compensated for by welfare benefits, however necessary these may be, provided to the unemployed and their families. Special attention needs to be given to women – who unfortunately still encounter discrimination in the workplace – and to some categories of workers whose conditions are precarious or dangerous, and whose pay is not commensurate to the importance of their social mission. (12/8/15, Peace)

We can appreciate the suffering created by unemployment and the lack of steady work, as reflected in the Book of Ruth, Jesus' own parable of the laborers forced to stand idly in the town square (Mt 20:1-16), and his personal experience of meeting people suffering from poverty and hunger. Sadly, these realities are present in many countries today, where the lack of employment opportunities takes its toll on the serenity of family life. (3/19/16, no. 25)