

Diocese of San Jose

Vicar General

May 7, 2009

Dear Fathers and Justice Ministry Coordinators,

Together with the Human Concerns Commission of the Diocese, I write to invite your parish to participate in our 11th annual ***Labor in the Pulpits*** program this coming Labor Day weekend, September 6-7, co-sponsored by the Interfaith Council on Economic Justice and the South Bay AFL-CIO Labor Council.

Labor in the Pulpits is deeply rooted in the tradition of Catholic Social Teaching. The message is positive and uplifting, which is sorely needed in these tough economic times. Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio, the Chairman of the Domestic Policy Committee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, expressed the Church's commitment to labor in this way:

Just as we need to remind ourselves as Americans that Labor Day is about workers and their unions, it is also important to remember as Catholics that the dignity of work and the rights of workers are central elements of Church teaching that continue to challenge all Catholics. For more than a century, the Church has insisted that "human work is a key, probably the essential key, to the whole social question" (Pope John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, 3). Our tradition has defended the right of workers to join together to secure decent work, wages, and a voice in economic life. (*Labor Day Statement, 2007, A Time to Remember; A Time to Recommit*)

For over a decade, the Diocese of San Jose has participated in ***Labor in the Pulpits***, reaching thousands of Catholic faithful in Silicon Valley. Some priests have chosen to integrate the materials provided in this packet as part of their own homilies or pulpit announcements. Others have invited priests involved in the labor movement or clergy from the broader interfaith community, or workers affected by poor working conditions to speak to their parishes. In 2008, 26 of our parishes invited speakers to Masses to lift up the struggles of local low-wage workers, particularly hotel workers.

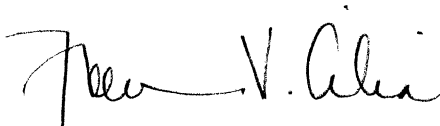
This year, the Interfaith Council will emphasize the need for people of faith to stand with hotel workers in their struggles for justice, so that that all workers can earn enough to provide for their families' basic needs and are treated with justice and dignity. Many faith leaders have walked along side hotel workers in their quest for large hotel corporations to become more responsive to the needs of their workers.

After Mass, parishioners will also be given the opportunity to participate in a signature campaign for a "Statement of Principles." The statement of principles is fully consistent with

our Catholic social teaching on economic justice and the rights of workers to express their concern for a living wage, healthcare, the right to organize, and to receive dignity and respect in the workplace. The materials for the signature campaign are included in this posting.

Please contact Rev. Rebecca Kuiken, Interfaith Council Director, by email at Rebecca@atwork.org or at 408-269-7872 for questions or to learn more about the program.

Sincerely,



Rev. Msgr. Francis V. Cilia
Vicar General

and

Human Concerns Commission
Diocese of San Jose