

# 2009 Labor in the Pulpit

The Interfaith Council 3-5 minute Speaker Guide

All Faiths

Good morning. Thank you (Father/Pastor) \_\_\_\_\_ for sharing your pulpit with me this morning.

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a \_\_\_\_\_ speaking on behalf of hotel workers and the Interfaith Council on Economic Justice.

Labor Day weekend is the time we honor work and workers. In the church, we celebrate that God, who loves us and cares about all aspects of our lives, is also concerned with our work lives.

In Santa Clara County, hotel workers provide hospitality for the stranger against enormous odds in the workplace, including increasing work loads, understaffing, persecution when they organize and lack of health coverage.

Last Labor Day, we gathered 7,000 cards supporting hotel workers and brought them to hotel management to tell of your concern for justice. We thank you for your support, and want to tell you today about new efforts.

*Speaker with worker:* I'd like to introduce \_\_\_\_\_ who is going to share what it's like to be a hotel worker in Silicon Valley.

(WORKER STORY)

OR, if no worker: "Let me tell you about one hotel worker...*Choose one of the hotel worker stories.*"

*[Worker gives testimony OR use one of the hotel worker stories below.]*

Rigoberto is a room service server at a hotel in Santa Clara. He's worked at his hotel in room service for eleven years. Three years ago, a new company took over his hotel, changed Rigoberto's job classification, and cut his hourly wage from \$13 to \$8.50 per hour. With his job at the Hyatt, Rigoberto is unable to support his wife and sons, who live in Mexico. They don't have money to buy any clothes, shoes, or supplies for his son's classes. Rigo hopes to have more time to spend with his family and community.

Eleazar is a room attendant at a hotel in Santa Clara. She's worked there for 3 years. Each day, she typically cleans 17 or more rooms. In a full day, Eleazar makes 33 beds, changes up to 99 sheets and 132 pillows. Because she cleans so many rooms, she does not take her 10 minute rest breaks. Her hips and lower back hurt from lifting so many mattresses. She often wakes up in the middle of the night because of the cramps in her legs and stiffness in her fingers. Eleazar hopes to have a safer workload.

Margarita is a room attendant at a hotel in Santa Clara. She is the sole provider for her family, including a husband who is battling a serious illness. She earns only 11.58 an hour, which barely covers her family's basic needs. Margarita cannot afford her hotel's health care plan, so she sometimes cannot purchase all the medicine she needs for her diabetes. She hopes to be able to have good quality health care.

\_\_\_\_\_’s story is not unique in Silicon Valley. But today you can make a difference.

First, we ask you to pray for hotel workers here and across the nation.

Second, you can sign this card. It is a Statement of Principles which shows that you are committed to helping hotel workers and all low-wage workers in their struggle for justice. You also will be supporting them and their families, offering them the gift of hope. Thank you.