

A Short Teaching on Labor  
by Deacon Gerry Palermo

Greetings and Happy Labor Day! I hope you enjoy your day Monday.

There have been advances and retreats in the treatment of laborers in these past few years.

The City of Seattle has become a leader in the labor movement leaving the east coast and Washington DC in the dust and Seattle deserves a shout out! New on the scene are (1) "Secure Scheduling", (2) "Predictable Pay", and (3) the controversial \$15 hourly rate. Bravo! #1 and #2 are no-brainers to me but #3 is a little more difficult to embrace. May I offer another view?

The newest trends in labor oppression are old issues just with a new facade.

There are two basic problems not being addresses well enough:

- (1) Treating people like they are machinery.
- (2) Hiring Managers with little or no ethical or moral compass.

#### PEOPLE AS MACHINES

The trend is to make the 24 hour clock be sliceable into smaller and smaller increments so as to make life completely controlled by the labor requirement of the company. Related is the trend to lock in 40 hour weeks which causes bizarre working arrangements that harm family life.

I am watching employers demanding O/T work on Saturday and Sunday and then reduction of hours later in the week. For example, work from 9:00 PM to 11:00 PM Saturday, and again Sunday 2:00 AM to 3:00 AM. Those three hours are not paid as O/T. Rather the employer deducts them for work hours later in the week to keep to 40 hours. Since they need worker coverage they slice it by day so that this person works Saturday through to Friday partial days throughout. In Florida where fully over 1/2 of workers make less than \$28,236 (FIU) this is not a livable situation. Thus these employees have a 40% increase in commuting time and cost and related family care costs. It removes opportunity to put time to better use in generating income. How does one sell labor Tuesday afternoon 1:00 to 2:15 PM, once in a while?

Employees are expected to have cell phone, without reimbursement.

Employees are expected to use their personal vehicle to travel with under reimbursement.

The business model of some companies is funded by the personal vehicle depreciation as profit.

People are being reduced to the utilization of machinery.

#### HIRING MANAGERS LACK ETHICS

For as educated as many managers are they clearly lack nearly any ethical or moral training that should cause them to work harder at and advocate for, even at the level of mere survival, the average employee. Instead they repeat the new mantra 'It is your choice'.

Make no mistake if you are acting as the instrument of these unethical and immoral practices you are in mortal danger. Give them back the 30 pieces of silver. There does not need to be a labor revolution. There needs to be a MANAGER REVOLUTION. Managers should organize a 'Manager Walk-Out Day' to protest that which they should naturally abhor!

### IT IS YOUR CHOICE – YOU HAVE FREEDOM

This is a greatly impaired comment. It ignores the spatial and temporal sciences. It ignores the role of economic power and basic understanding of humans and human labor or family life. It relies upon your instinct to say 'I got mine, too bad for you'. It rides the edges of the law to a razor edge. To be blunt, it is evil.

### BEFORE YOU GO – SOME MORAL EDUCATION

If one's upbringing stresses only the naked energy of the will or the power of the intellect, one's [own] creativity and freedom are greatly impaired. (Further on)... It [becomes] almost impossible to realize, or even to imagine, what great harm is done to freedom and creativity by various thought-patterns which degrade the body, the emotions, passions and all human affectivities. (Free & Faithfull in Christ, Bernard Haring, Seabury Press, 1978, p 71).

The following duties bind the wealthy owner and the employer (and MANAGERS): not to look upon their work people as their bondsmen, but to respect in every man his dignity as a person ennobled by Christian character. They are reminded that, according to natural reason and Christian philosophy, working for gain is creditable, not shameful, to a man, since it enables him to earn an honorable livelihood; but to misuse men as though they were things in the pursuit of gain, or to value them solely for their physical powers - that is truly shameful and inhuman. (RN, 20).

We need to remember how labor naturally and properly takes primacy over capital. It is fragile, it is bound in time, it is exhaustible, and it is damageable without repair. Labor is bound without exception to the family and person and never disconnected from them.

This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live (Deut 30:19).

Peace be with you.

Deacon Gerry