

PEACE AND JUSTICE



Article – 13

The following is an excerpt from: <https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/forming-consciences-for-faithful-citizenship-title>

THE COMMON GOOD

49. Human dignity is respected and the common good is fostered only if **human rights are protected and basic responsibilities** are met. Every human being has a right to life, the fundamental right that makes all other rights possible, and a right to access those things required for human decency—food and shelter, education and employment, health care and housing, freedom of religion and family life. The right to exercise religious freedom publicly and privately by individuals and institutions along with freedom of conscience need to be constantly defended. In a fundamental way, the right to free expression of religious beliefs protects all other rights. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities—to one another, to our families, and to the larger society. Rights should be understood and exercised in a moral framework rooted in the dignity of the human person. 50. The economy must serve people, not the other way around. It is therefore necessary that an economic system serve the dignity of the human person and the common good by respecting the **dignity of work and protecting the rights of workers**. A "growth in justice," according to Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium*, requires more than economic growth, while presupposing such growth: it requires decisions, programs, mechanisms and processes specifically geared to a better distribution of income, the creation of sources of employment and an integral promotion of the poor which goes beyond a simple welfare mentality. I am far from proposing an irresponsible populism, but the economy can no longer turn to remedies that are a new poison, such as attempting to increase profits by reducing the work force and thereby adding to the ranks of the excluded. (no. 204). Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation. Employers contribute to the common good through the services or products they provide and by creating jobs that uphold the dignity and rights of workers—to productive work, to decent and just wages, to adequate benefits and security in their old age, to the choice of whether to organize and join unions, to the opportunity for legal status for immigrant workers, to private property, and to economic initiative. Workers also have responsibilities—to provide a fair day's work for a fair day's pay, to treat employers and co-workers with respect, and to carry out their work in ways that contribute to the common good. Workers, employers, and unions should not only advance their own interests but also work together to advance economic justice and the well-being of all. Pope Francis has summarized well the Church's teaching on work in *Laudato Si'*. "Work," he writes, should be the setting for . . . rich personal growth, where many aspects of life enter into play: creativity, planning for the future, developing our talents, living out our values, relating to others, giving glory to God. . . . Work is a necessity, part of the meaning of life on this earth, a path to growth, human development and personal fulfillment. Helping the poor financially must always be a provisional solution in the face of pressing needs. The broader objective should always be to allow them a dignified life through work. (*Laudato Si'*, no. 127-128)

In Christ,
Deacon Joe Fragale - jfragale@stambroseonthehill.com