



ONE VOICE

The official publication of the Church People-Workers Solidarity (CWS)

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Editorial

Society's Transformation and the Role of Women

"And it pleases me to think that the Church is not 'il Chiesa' ('the Church', masculine): it is 'la Chiesa' (feminine). The Church is a woman! The Church is a mother! And that's beautiful." - Pope Francis



These are the profound words of Pope Francis on the importance of women not only in the Church but also in society. The Pope believes that women should be empowered and be given important roles in the Church and in society. Addressing participants of a seminar organized by the Women's Section of the Pontifical Council of the Laity, Pope Francis praised the "indispensable contribution of women in society; in particular their sensitivity and intuition toward the other, the weak and the unprotected."



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The empowerment of women is one of the key components in the liberation of all the basic sectors of society and the Church. Therefore, all sectors are challenged to support the women as they liberate themselves from all oppressive structures in society and in the Church. Their victory is the victory of all.

In the Philippines, women bear the brunt of their families' suffering. Women are being

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Filipina workers assemble micro motor fans for computers at the Sanyo Denki plant in Subic Bay industrial area. Photo by: ROMEO GACAD/AFP/Getty Images

devastated not only by natural calamities but also by human-made disasters. Under the Aquino administration, the lives of women, especially those from the marginalized sectors, have worsened rather than improved. Mothers lament that their children suffer from hunger due to the continuing price hike of rice and other basic commodities such as oil, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), electricity and water. Moreover, the neoliberal economic policies of the Aquino government have resulted in a growing demand for low-paid and flexible female workers in export processing zones. Still, more than one million women remain unemployed according to the Center for Women's Resource (CWR).

The women and their families are deprived of affordable and accessible health services. The privatization of government-owned hospitals such as the Fabella Hospital is making the situation even worse, resulting in more maternal and child deaths.

The worsening condition of women in the Philippines has forced many Filipinas to look for better jobs abroad. These foreign jobs separate them from their families. They work in oppressive, violent and alienating working conditions.

St. Pope John Paul II in his encyclical *Christifideles Laici*, refers to this condition of women as “slavery.”

He writes about situations “...where women are exposed to more humiliating and degrading forms of 'manipulation', that most assuredly reduce them to slavery to those who are stronger.” Similarly, Pope Francis is saddened about the plight of “...those women who endure situations of exclusion, mistreatment and violence.”

Notwithstanding these adverse situations, the women's role in the betterment of Philippine society has had a long and glorious history – from the pre-Hispanic times to the revolt against colonizers, up

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Editorial Board

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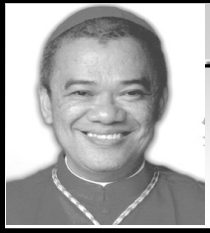
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Bishop Gerardo A. Alminaza, D.D.

CHRIST AND THE WORKERS

Unemployment: Social Exclusion not Pleasing to God

There is poverty and suffering in the country and the world, not because of overpopulation but because of inequality, manifested in the huge mass of people being excluded from gainful livelihood (unemployment).

Pope Francis lamented, “The unemployed and underemployed risk being relegated to the margins of society, becoming victims of social exclusion.”

Myrna, a worker in an Export Processing Zone in Mactan, Cebu, shared with me how the company summarily terminated her from work when they started organizing workers against the oppressive working conditions in the garment factory where she worked.

Unemployment

Myrna is not alone. Despite the Philippines registering the highest gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate in Southeast Asian regions last year, “the latest Labor Force Survey pegs unemployment at 6.5% of the national workforce and, more tellingly, underemployment at 17.9% (the latter being the percentage of the workforce that is employed but looking for additional work)” (*Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines [CBCP] 2014 Lenten Message*).

In January 2014, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said, the unemployment rate climbed to 7.5 percent from last year’s 7.1 percent even after the GDP last year grew 7.2 percent.

“In its survey on poverty for the last quarter of 2013, the Social Weather Stations (SWS) reports that 55% of respondents actually consider themselves poor, up from 50% the previous quarter. Clearly, many people see themselves as being excluded from opportunities to live a decent life” (*CBCP 2014 Lenten Message*).

Pope Francis considers UNEMPLOYMENT as a very serious problem affecting many countries: “It is the consequence of an economic system that is no longer able to create work, because it has placed at its centre the idol of money.” (*March 20, 2014, to employees and managers of a steel company*).

Pope Francis deplored today’s world where “*everything comes under the laws of competition and the survival of the fittest, where the powerful feed upon the powerless. As a consequence, masses of people find themselves excluded and marginalized: without work, without possibilities, without any means of escape.*” Human beings are themselves considered consumer goods to be used and then discarded... Those excluded are no longer society’s underside or its fringes or its disenfranchised – they are no longer even a part of it. The excluded are not the “exploited” but the outcast, the “leftovers” (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium [EG], 53*).

The CBCP 2014 Lenten Message said that we experience moral destitution as inequality. It quoted Pope Francis’ critique of capitalism: “Some people continue to defend trickle-down

Opinion

theories which assume that economic growth, encouraged by a free market, will inevitably succeed in bringing about greater justice and inclusiveness in the world. This opinion, which has never been confirmed by the facts, expresses a crude and naïve trust in the goodness of those wielding economic power and in the sacralized workings of the prevailing economic system. Meanwhile, the excluded are still waiting” (EG, 54).

Solidarity

Each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society. This demands that we be docile and attentive to the cry of the poor and to come to their aid (EG, 187).

The Visayas Clergy Discernment Group and the Cebu Archdiocesan Discernment Group have, in various instances, supported workers’ struggle against union-busting. Cebu Archbishop Jose S. Palma mediated a labor dispute where the company was set to terminate 18 workers, including leaders of the labor union. After interventions, termination of workers did not push through.

Pope Francis said to workers and managers: “The various political, social and economic actors are called upon to promote a different approach, based on justice and solidarity, to ensure the possibility of dignified work for all.”

“This great challenge requires the involvement of the Christian community as a whole. The first challenge is to revive the roots of faith and of our adhesion to Jesus Christ. This is the inspiring principle in the choices of a Christian: faith. Faith

moves mountains! Christian faith is able to enrich society through the concrete element of brotherhood it embodies... Never cease to hope for a better future. Do not let yourselves be trapped in the vortex of pessimism! If everyone does his part, if we all put the human person and his dignity at the centre, and if we consolidate an attitude of solidarity and fraternal sharing, inspired by the Gospel, we can emerge from the swamp of this difficult and burdensome period of economic turmoil”.

Workers’ Empowerment

The Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP 2) in 1991 said that in our country “where the poor and marginalized have little genuine participation... we realize that integral development of people will be possible only with their corresponding empowerment” (PCP 2, 326).

PCP 2 declared that, “We need to activate fundamental charisms of freedom and responsibility, and encourage the emergence of people’s organizations, sectoral associations, inspired by the principle of solidarity and empowered by the principle of subsidiarity”(PCP 2,328).

For the workers, it is important that they become organized in labor unions and workers’ associations for them to be empowered in charting their future. It is imperative for the Church’s Social Action Centers to have programs in helping facilitate the building up of workers’ organizations.

It is only through organized strength that workers will participate in social development, as “No social transformation is genuine and lasting where people themselves do not actively participate in the process” (PCP 2, 325). #

In PH, it's not more fun to be a woman worker

2.3 million Filipino women render unpaid work

For Filipino women workers, the Aquino government's new tourism slogan, "It's more fun in the Philippines," sounds more like a mockery than an accurate description of their living conditions.

Far from the country's posh financial district where notions of female empowerment are propagated, millions of Filipino women toil with no income and job security. In fact, they are concentrated in volatile and informal jobs, mostly in the rural areas, with very low wage rates or no compensation at all.

Unpaid work

Around 2.3 million Filipino women render unpaid labor to help their families earn a living, according to the latest Gender Statistics on Labor and Employment of the labor department. This segment of female workforce, categorized as "unpaid family worker", is mostly concentrated in the agriculture sector where entire families render work in farms.

An Aeta in Central Luzon ekes out a living by gathering empty shell casings for money in a wasteland that used to host the US - Philippines military exercises. (Photo by Tine Sabillo)



Since unpaid female workers have no pre-determined scope of work, they experience long hours of strenuous work that poses serious risks to their health and productive well-being. Health risks are actually higher especially in plantations run by foreign agro-industrial firms .

Aside from the unpaid female workers, the survey shows that there are 1.63 million Filipino women in private households, normally as helpers, who suffer measly wages and unsecure employment terms. This figure does not include Filipino overseas domestic helpers.

Females working for private households in the country earn only P123.20 per day (as of 2010), or merely P3,203 a month. Such wage rate is simply not sufficient amid skyrocketing prices of basic commodities.

Wage inequality

Even in the manufacturing sector, women are still in a disadvantaged position as they earn an average wage that is 7.3 percent lower than men's wage in the sector. Women factory workers earn an average P296.36 daily, lower than men's daily rate P319.75, though both wage levels are still below the highest prevailing basic daily rate of P404.

Wage inequality is sharpest in the hotels and restaurants subsector, wherein women workers earn wages that are 24.42 percent lower than their male counterparts. Female workers in the sector earn an average daily rate of P240.80, while males earn P318.60 a day.

Overall, males comprise the larger chunk of the total wage and salary workers in the Philippines at

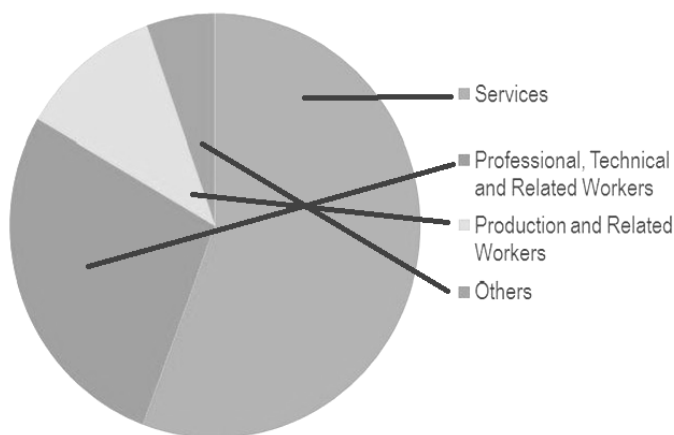
Features

	Men	Women	Diff (M-W)
Agricultural	156.32	135.85	20.47
Non- Agricultural	342.42	324.62	17.80
Manufacturing	319.75	296.36	23.39
Wholesale and Retail of Personal and Household Goods	286.80	258.76	28.04
Hotels and Restaurants	318.60	240.80	77.80
Private Households with Employed Persons	188.15	123.20	64.95

The story of wage inequality is the same in the whole sale and retail of consumer goods, the largest service subsector. Females' daily wage rate in the subsector is 9.77 percent lower than male's wage rate

12.13 million, compared to the 7.49 million female salary workers.

But the irony of all these is that the President Benigno Aquino III's dating spree with different women graces the headlines while gender inequality at work remains left out in discussions.



3 out of 5 newly hired overseas Filipino workers are women

Three out of five new hires of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) over the past decade were women. Three-fifths (60.6%) of annual deployment of new hires migrants workers were females from 2001 to 2010, base on POEA data. According to DOLE, women migrant workers were dominant in

three (3) major occupation groups: services (55.7%), professionals and technical workers (27.7%) and production and related workers (11.2%) (Graph 1). Most of the women in services are domestic helpers or caregivers.

Remittances

OFW remittances in the Philippines account for more than 10% of GDP, the highest among Asian countries according to the ADB. These numbers are expected to increase, as the remittance in 2011 hits the all time high record with P20.1 billion since 2001. A large part of this remittances were sent by women migrant workers. Female OFWs sent P3.55 billion, 39% of the total remittances in the year 2010, according to NSO. On the top of these came from laborers and unskilled workers, 19.6%. Despite receiving low wages, laborers and unskilled workers contribute billions due to their huge number.

The rising demand for female OFW only shows that the women continue to be face of migration in the Philippines. #

Source: Ecumenical Institute for Labor Education and Research, Inc. (Eiler) Labor Bulletin

In Photos: CWS Activities

Overview of CWS's activities during the first half of 2014

CWS has started the year with a line-up of activities that contributes to the conscientization of workers' of their rights as well as activities that deepen the solidarity of churchpeople with the workers.

Education and Training Program



From January to May, 2014, CWS initiated lecture series among the workers that focused on the issue of contractualization, their basic rights, two - tier wage system and the issue of pork barrel. CWS was able to hold eight lecture series in Diocese of Novaliches, three in Archdiocese of Manila, three in Diocese of Parañaque, and four in Diocese of Kalookan.



For the Welfare and Support Services, CWS conducted four Para-legal training among the

workers. Moreover, CWS solicited goods from churchpeople to be distributed to workers and their families such as Express Coat Enterprises, Inc., Janrey Philippines Corporation, Pentagon Steel Corporation and Guarin Hauling Services. #

School Supplies Giving



As part of its yearly commitment to provide school supplies to the workers children, CWS solicited school supplies from its churchpeople networks. CWS distributed school supplies to the 120 children of workers from Express Coat Enterprises, Inc., Janrey Philippines Corporation, Pentagon Steel Corporation and Guarin Hauling Services, Karnation Industries, Eton Residences and Samahan ng Mangagawang Kristiyanong Pamayanan (SMKP). #



In Photos: CWS Activities

Networking among Church people

As one of the resolutions approved by the national CWS Conference on 2011 in Cebu City which aimed at strengthening the ties between workers and churchpeople in dioceses, the Church people and Workers Solidarity in Diocese of Malolos was launched in St. Mary's College, Meycauyan Bulacan on April 11, 2014.



Graced by Bishop Deogracias Iñiguez, Jr., D.D., one of the conveners of CWS National Capital Region, the whole-day event was attended by 128 participants including priests and lay leaders from 7 parishes, priests from Protestant churches such as Iglesia Filipina Independiente and United Methodist Church and workers from various areas in Bulacan such as Coca Cola Corporation, Subic Export Processing Zone and Tricycle Drivers Association of Meycauyan, Bulacan.



Testimonials from workers were shared. The activity also became a venue for the creation of possible future plans and activities among the churchpeople and workers. #

Integration/Immersion Program

Aside from the Christmas in the Picketline among the Workers on December 14, 2013, in Pentagon Steel Corporation, CWS facilitated two integration program.. These were:



- a. On January 2, 2014, CWS facilitated a one day integration of thirteen women youth-leaders in the picket line of Pentagon workers. They were part of the Asian Young Women's Leadership Training (AYLT) which was held in the Philippines from December 26 to January 8, 2014. The women youth-delegates who were visitors of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) - Youth Desk were from Myanmar, Thailand, Singapore, Laos, Japan, South Korea and Philippines.
- b. On March 1, 2014, CWS facilitated a one day exposure of six youth members of Kalipunan ng Kristiyanong Kabataan sa Pilipinas in Pentagon Steel Corporation picket line. About twenty workers from Pentagon acted as their hosts. The whole day integration was highlighted by the sharing of the present situation of the workers struggle and how this struggle affected their daily lives.

In Photos: CWS Activities



Mangagawang Kristiyanong Pamayanan (SMKP) of Diocese of Novaliches.



Also on May 21, 2014, CWS together with the Coalition sponsored a forum to solidify the plan of the group in opposing the privatization of government owned hospitals. This was held in the conference room of POC. It was attended by more than 60 participants from the health and church networks. One of the highlights of the activity was the mass action and noise barrage held in front of the POC.

c. On January 24 and 30, 2014, 150 3rd year and 4th year high school students from St. Theresa's College, Quezon City had a one day immersion at the Gibi Shoe Factory in Marikina City. Before the tour inside the factory, the workers discussed their present plight to the students wherein the students asked some questions thereafter. #



As for its **Campaign and Advocacy Program**, CWS, as one of the conveners of Coalition against the Privatization of Philippine Orthopedic Center (POC) joined other support groups and organizations in two mobilizations in front of Supreme court to stop the privatization of POC and other government owned hospitals. These were on February 3 and March 3, 2014. The church people who joined the mass actions were the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (ICM), Missionary of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (MSC), Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (CICM), Order of Servants of Mary (OSM), Philippine Young Christian Workers (PYCW), Samahan ng



As part of conscientization efforts on the workers issues, CWS co-sponsored three forums, "The Legacy of Andres Bonifacio and the Workers Continuing Quest for Human Dignity", "Crisis and Challenges: Yearend Report on Worker's Right" with Center for Trade Union and Human Rights (CTUHR) and "Simabahan at Manggagawa... Magkatuwang sa Buhay na may Dignidad" with Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI). #

Cardinal Tagle's concern for migrants welcomed



Photo courtesy of CBCP News

The alliance of overseas Filipinos, Migrante International, welcomed Manila Archbishop Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle's sincere concern for the plight of migrants and refugees.

In his address delivered before the Filipino-American community at Fordham University in New York, Cardinal Tagle said that the Church "must lead in viewing migrants and refugees beyond numbers and beyond categorization, towards a recovery of the full human dimension of their condition."

According to Garry Martinez, chairperson of Migrante International and one of CWS conveners, Cardinal Tagle's latest statement is a significant recognition of the Catholic Church's role in addressing the plight of migrants and their families. Cardinal Tagle is a member of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerants.

"We are very glad that Cardinal Tagle continues to take on the cudgels for our poor countrymen, especially our migrant workers. His acknowledgement of the phenomenon of 'forced migration' is a huge step forward in the Church's view of the situation of our overseas Filipino workers. We are willing to work with Cardinal Tagle, especially in the urgent matter of addressing the root causes of forced migration in the country resulting in massive deployment of OFWs abroad and social costs of migration," Martinez said.

He said that they agree fully with Cardinal Tagle in the view that forced migration can only be resolved if factors such as poverty, unemployment, landlessness, conflicts, hazards and disasters are decisively addressed by the Philippine government.

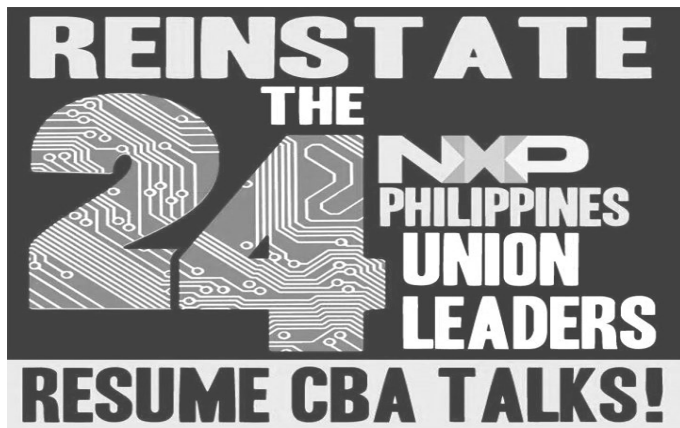
Martinez also urged Cardinal Tagle to call the attention of the BS Aquino government for its implementation of a more aggressive and anti-migrant labor export policy.

Under Aquino, the number of OFWs deployed daily has risen from 2,500 in 2010 to 4,884 in 2012. Last year, Aquino has breached the two (2) million mark in deployment of OFWs for a year, the highest record in history.

Migrante International estimates that about 15 million Filipino OFWs documented and undocumented are currently outside the country. "Poverty, unemployment, landlessness and lack of social services feed on the desperation of our people, forcing them to migrate and risk unstable and dangerous conditions abroad," he said.

"We hope that Cardinal Tagle can help us give voice to the growing number of faceless and voiceless OFWs who continue to call for justice, rights and welfare and protection. His statements give testament to the growing inequality and injustice in the country. Only through genuine land reform and national industrialization can forced migration be curbed," Martinez noted. He said that Cardinal Tagle's recent statement will prove instrumental in the framework-setting of the upcoming Church Witnessing With Migrants (CWWM) International Conference on May 11-12, 2014 which will be held in Sweden. The said conference will be attended by representatives from the Catholic Church, Protestant and Christian churches, as well as various stakeholders in the migrants' sector. #

Dismissal of NXP-24, a deliberate move to weaken union organizing in EPZs—CTUHR



The Center for Trade Union and Human Rights slammed the unjust dismissal of 24 union officials of NXP Semiconductors Company Workers Unions (NXPSCIWU) saying such was a “deliberate move to weaken union organizing in export processing zones.”

“Export processing zones implements a no union-no strike policy. Despite this, NXPSCIWU is one of the few independent unions that managed to persist inside an EPZ. This management attempt to bust NXP-union is thus not only an attack to the local union itself but a deliberate move supported by the PEZA to weaken union organizing in industrial enclaves,” said Daisy Arago, CTUHR Executive Director.

The group pointed out that the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) has always upheld a very repressive policy in union organizing inside economic zones in order to keep a favorable and peaceful climate for business at the expense of workers’ legal and democratic rights. “Economic zones exist like ‘independent’ kingdoms without respect for Philippine labor laws. In many cases, even the Department of Labor and Employment cannot enforce the law inside these eco-zones let alone hold PEZA and companies responsible for their violations of workers’ rights,” Arago added.

On May 5, 24 of the 26 executive council members of NXPSCIWU was barred from entering

the gates of the Light Industry and Science Park (LISP) in Laguna where NXP — Philips is located, apparently because they have been fired by the company for not reporting to work on three official holidays in the month April and on Labor Day, May 1.

The labor NGO said that NXP union has achieved gains and benefits for its workers as proven by its past collective bargaining agreements and has been gaining ground in organizing workers inside the LISP. “NXP [union] is reaching out to other workers inside the LISP by extending services and educating workers as part of its efforts to organize workers in other factories. Reden Alcantara, NXP union president is also the current head of the Metal Workers Alliance of the Philippines, proof that NXP is actively pursuing solidarity work with workers beyond its local,” Arago added.

Noting that harassment on unions generally intensifies during CBA negotiations, Arago added that the timing of the dismissal is “certainly meant to undermine” the NXP union’s collective bargaining power. “But aside from the CBA issues, the assault on NXP union is also a warning that any attempt to organize independent unions in eco-zones will face similar attack,” Arago averred.

The group expressed full support to the fight of the NXP workers. “We demand that the sacked leaders of NXP union be brought back to work immediately and that CBA negotiations resume. We challenge the Labor Department to act for the workers’ interest and push the company and PEZA to stop violating workers right and uphold workers freedom to organize inside the economic zones.” Arago said. #

Source : www.ctuhr.org

On Herrera Law’s 25th year: 1989 Labor Code amendments post-EDSA nightmare for workers – labor NGO

The 1989 Labor Code amendments, also known as Herrera Law, has made Filipino workers more vulnerable to exploitation and suppression for 25 years according to a labor research group.

News Briefs

Ecumenical Institute for Labor Education and Research (EILER) said Herrera Law created the legal grounds for contractual work arrangements that cheapened workers' wages and for the Assumption of Jurisdiction (AJ) which is Labor Department's signal fire for police-military crackdown of workers' strikes.

"Ironically, Herrera Law constitutes Filipino workers' worst nightmare in a period supposedly marked by restoration of democracy following the EDSA 1 uprising. For the first time, the law legalized contractualization that has become a grave threat to workers' right to job security and decent wages," EILER executive director Anna Leah Escresa said.

Escresa explained that under Articles 106-109 of the Herrera Law, the Labor Secretary is given the power to issue orders that will promote hiring of contractuels and other non-regular workers such as the current Department Order 18-A issued in 2011.

"Herrera Law legalized the plague that is contractualization. What was initially a work arrangement for janitorial and other casual jobs became the normal labor arrangement that cuts across all economic sectors from manufacturing to wholesale and retail trade up to business process outsourcing (BPO)," Escresa said.

Contractualization and other forms of flexible employment also contribute to the employment of child labor in plantations, as the "pakyawan system" is massively used to evade hiring of regular agricultural workers. Under the system, child laborers are forced to help the family meet the production quota.

Moreover, the Herrera Law also infringes on workers' right to strike and peaceful assembly. "The Law's Article 263 authorizes the Labor Secretary to issue an Assumption of Jurisdiction (AJ) order that will serve as basis for the swift deployment of police and military forces in companies with labor disputes – a legal government crackdown that was demonstrated during the Hacienda Luisita massacre where seven striking farmworkers were killed and dozens injured," Escresa said.

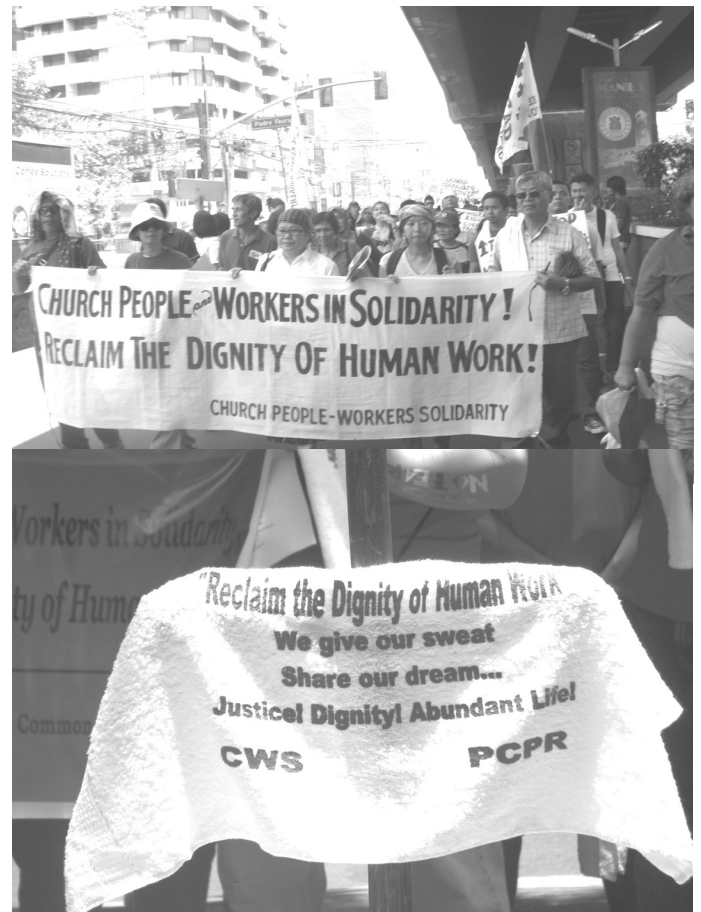
"Assumption of Jurisdiction is clearly a fascist government instrument to quell democratic actions of unions. It has clearly no place in a democratic society we all aspire to live in," she added.

EILER also noted that Herrera Law provided the framework for tripartism in the labor sector, a mechanism that uses bogus social dialogue among representatives from labor, government and companies to implement anti-labor policies.

"With all the ill effects of Herrera Law to workers' right to security of tenure, right to strike and decent wages, it is but timely for the government to repeal the law and replace with a genuinely pro-labor Labor Code," Escresa concluded. #

Source: www.eiler.ph

May 1, 2014 Labor Day Activity
CWS held a Mass at Iglesia Filipina Independiente which was attended churchpeople and workers. It was followed by a symbolic liturgy at the Cathedral's ground before the group marched to Liwasang Bonifacio and Mendiola.



Statement

Statement of Churchpeople – Workers’ Solidarity (CWS) International Workers’ Day (May 1, 2014)

*“Church People and Workers in Solidarity
Reclaim the Dignity of Human Work!”*

The annual celebration of Labor Day on the first day of May is a good opportunity for the Church to express his gratitude to the workers, his special concern for their welfare and once again put forward its social teachings on labor which serves as a reminder to promote ethical, just and humane policies in the world of work.

Situation of the Workers

The workers are faced with multifarious problems:

- **growing legalization of contractualization/joblessness.**

It gravely undermines workers’ rights to security of tenure, self-organization, and collective bargaining agreement (CBA). President Aquino has kept the contractual-employment legal and more widespread through Department Order 18-A Series of 2011.

In January of 2014, Philippines jobless rate rose to 7.5%, up from 6.5 % in the previous period. Such employment situation gives us a glimpse of how millions of Filipinos are unable to cope with rising prices of petroleum and basic commodities.

- **unjust wages**

The present statistic shows that the profit of transnational corporations grew from 20 – 100 % – the highest since 1940's. On the other hand, the International Labor Organization (ILO) said that the growth in the salary of workers throughout the world from 2008 to 2009 decreased by 50%.

In the Philippines, the imposition of the Two-Tiered Wage System has meant a wage cut and a wage freeze. Millions of Filipino workers continue to lose human dignity with very meagre wages and substandard quality of work. But still the Aquino government has continued to reject calls for a significant wage hike. Even the Phil. Institute for Development Studies (PIDS), which help government planners and policy-makers in the executive and legislative branches of government suggested in removing the minimum wage to allow more workers to be employed.

- **the right to organize**

The Aquino government continues to implement the same anti-labor policies as the previous administrations. The unwritten incentive for foreign investors: “Come to the Philippines ‘where labor is cheap, docile, not unionized.’” In practice, the workers are unjustly terminated when they are suspected of organizing themselves.

Migrant Filipino workers

The Philippine government has called OFW’s as the country’s modern heroes. However, these praises ring empty considering the government’s unwillingness to stop the staggering outflow of 5,000 Filipinos leaving daily in search of employment abroad, only to be exploited by their foreign employers. Added to this is the deathly inflow of six to ten bodies of OFW’s repatriated every day citing data from Migrant International.

Teachings of the Church on Labor

In his Labor Day message on May 1, 2012, Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle stated that the Church teachings constantly reiterate that the workers are more important than capital and profit and the workers are the key part of business and production. The growth of material or financial side of production is also vital, but should never be a reason to exploit workers. Putting emphasis on capital and profits will always bring damage to the dignity of workers including their families and the entire society. Priority is still the dignity of man created in the image of God.

Call to Action

In the face of such miserable plight of the Filipino workers, we, from the Churchpeople Workers Solidarity (CWS) join hands to advance the struggle of the workers. In the context of worsening conditions of the workers, CWS which was convened by churchpeople and workers’ organizations on September 12 – 15, 2011 in Cebu City, is determined to pursue the struggle for workers’ dignity and rightful recognition as partners in the pursuit of peace and progress in the country.

CWS affirms the “dignity of work based on the dignity of workers as co-creators of God and aims to live by the principle of putting the interest of labor above that of capital: workers’ rights over profit.”

Lastly, CWS pay its highest tribute to its co-convenor, the late Fr. Joe Dizon, a patriot and humble servant of the working class people. His life as a priest was devoted to serving and loving the workers and building various types of workers associations and unions. He immersed himself in workers’ struggle till his death. His commitment and legacy will linger forever in the minds and hearts of the people.

**Uphold workers’ rights!
Reclaim the Dignity of the Human Work!
No to Contractualization!
Pass P125 Wage Hike Bill Now!**

Editorial from page 2

to the present struggle for significant economic and political change in our society. No matter what the odds are, these organized women continue to struggle for:

1. The right to the land they work on; as well as the right to full and gainful employment and living wage;
2. The eradication of all forms of discrimination and violence against women;
3. The right to participate freely in decision-making processes in the family, the community, the Churches and the nation at large;
4. The right to fight for basic health care and services for all,
5. The right to a marriage founded on mutual blessing and respect, with equality and dignity; and to adequate support for the rearing and caring of children;
6. The right to fight for children's basic needs like proper child care, nutrition, health, and protection from abuse and exploitation,
7. The right to assert and protect their country's sovereignty and national patrimony;
8. The right to a government that is truly democratic and representative of the interest of the majority.

The Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP II) highlights the significant role of women in the Church's "evangelizing" and "liberating mission": "[they] are active in advocating justice and peace issues. They have regularly assumed the leadership in many church-related organizations, charitable and educational institutions. In Church activities, the concern is not the lack of participation of women but rather the relative inactivity of men" (PCP 2, #387).

When the women win their struggle for liberation, all sectors of society share their victory. It is imperative to support the women as they work together with all oppressed sectors for a genuinely free, just, and humane society. Their victory is the victory of all. #

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