



As part of LCWR's **100 Days of Prayer, Fasting & Advocacy**, the Sisters of Mercy invite you to join us September 1, which is Labor Day in the United States. While these U.S. federal holidays are intended to provide opportunities for rest, including for workers, they instead have become a day of **additional** labor for some, with advertisements bombarding people to encourage a frenzy of spending. And with the decline of unions, unjust labor practices disproportionately affect those who are underemployed and undercompensated for their work, especially women and people of color. On U.S. Labor Day, to focus on our Critical Concerns for Women and Anti-racism, the Sisters of Mercy encourage you to:

- pray for those who bear the burden of excessive labor
- fast from purchasing on September 1 (U.S. Labor Day)
- search for businesses that are dedicated to ethical employment practices

Prayer for Labor Day

By Sue-Rae Glinka, Mercy Associate

Creator of All, on the seventh day you rested, and in your wisdom, you encourage us to do the same. Labor Day was established to honor those who earn their daily bread through the work of their hands and give them a respite from their labors.

Help us to be mindful of the multitudes that labor long hours under difficult conditions, in the heat of the day, with insufficient compensation, so that our lives can be easier.

We have the fruit of the vine at our fingertips, but who picked it? Who loaded it on trucks and brought it to be displayed and purchased for my enjoyment?

In our complex society, a thousand workers contribute to meeting our needs and desires – what worker labored at a sewing machine to make my blouse? What factory worker stood all day at their post, assembling parts, operating machinery, or packaging food?

Help us to be mindful, and in our prayers for them, make us worthy of their gifts.

Who gets to rest, and who must labor on? When the reward for their labor is insufficient, who pays the price? When society lets some go hungry while others enjoy extravagance, what part did I play?

Help me to be mindful and make changes in my life that lessen the burden on the unseen and unrewarded laborers who cushion me from the knowledge of my complicity.

Labor Day is a day to celebrate the worker. Through our actions and prayers, may we lighten their burdens and forge a new day, when all will be celebrated for their contributions and rewarded with just compensation.

Creator God, help us to be mindful. Amen.

Fasting from retail & online spending

In support of workers like cashiers and cooks, bus drivers and warehouse packers, plumbers and port workers, farmers and grocers, nursing assistants and nannies, the Sisters of Mercy invite you to fast from spending money—both in person and online—on September 1 to the extent it's safe for you to do so. Your intent to fast suffices if real need arises.

Advocacy & action

We encourage you to learn to shop more ethically. Look online for businesses that practice inclusive hiring practices, pay fair wages, or support labor unions. Consider businesses that make accommodations that make them inclusive for those with disabilities. The Mercy Justice Team commends to you the [DEI database](#) to help in your search.

Explore local, small businesses that need your support to keep up the good work. Here are some small steps to change your shopping habits:

- Go to that family-owned bodega one day a week instead of a big-name drive-thru.
- Buy direct from a manufacturer rather than a big online seller.
- Find a local cobbler to fix your worn-out shoes rather than buying new.
- Look for a minority-owned crafter who can make that unique gift you've been looking for.
- Take your car to a woman-owned auto shop for your next oil change.
- Immigrants own businesses in every sector; seek them out when choosing a professional.

It's overwhelming to think about changing your shopping habits all at once, so start small and keep going. This is advocacy!

Ethical labor practices

A common term used in business for some ethical labor practices is diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). While the term has been used in a negative way by politicians, the purpose of DEI is to *eliminate* favoritism in the workplace and remove barriers like sexism and racism in hiring practices. Properly used, these practices lead employers to seek higher-quality candidates, and create a workforce that better reflects the community. This opens employment opportunities to candidates who often have been excluded and might not get a fair shake elsewhere, including women, Black and Indigenous people, people of color, and people with disabilities. Employers who focus on these policies likely also prioritize fair compensation and benefits for employees, as well as readily providing accommodations for disabilities, both visible and invisible. When used effectively, DEI creates a thriving, broadly qualified workforce that reflects the community it serves.

You can read a more in-depth exploration of these ethical policies in [this article](#) by Sister Joanne Lappettito, RSM.