

# NEWSLETTER

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## Finding Dignity and Purpose in Work

March brings with it the feast of St. Joseph, the patron saint of workers, making it the perfect time to reflect on the dignity and purpose of work. This occasion prompts us to consider the deeper meaning of work, beyond its mere role as a means of earning a living. In fact, work has the potential to shape our lives in ways that extend far beyond financial gain.

### See - Judge - Act

*"Work is a fundamental dimension of human existence.*

*It is not just a means to earn a living.*

*But a means of personal fulfilment and participation in God's creation"*

*~ Pope John Paul II ~*

The idea that "*working is not work*" suggests that genuine work is about more than just physical labour or completing obligatory tasks. True work involves engagement, care, and a sense of purpose - it should not only sustain us but also allow us to contribute positively to society. In various teachings, particularly within the Catholic Church, work is seen as something that should be meaningful, with a focus on both personal and social growth.

### The Dignity of Work and the Human Person

Several papal encyclicals have stressed the intrinsic dignity of work. Work, in its most profound sense, is not a mere transaction between employer and employee. It is an expression of our humanity, a way to fulfil our potential, and a contribution to the greater good. For Christians, work represents an active participation in God's creation - a calling to engage with the world in a way that is both purposeful and transformative.

Work can be understood from three key perspectives:

- **Work as "actus personae":** It is a personal act that involves the whole person - both body and spirit.

- **Work as a means of human fulfilment:** Through work, we transform nature, achieve personal satisfaction, and grow into fuller versions of ourselves.

- **Work as more than survival:** Work should not merely be a tool for subsistence, but an opportunity to fulfil one's calling and serve society.

In this light, the dignity of a worker is not defined solely by the quantity or type of work performed but by the positive impact their labour has on the common good. However, this dignity is compromised when workers are reduced to mere tools of production, or when their fundamental rights are disregarded. Poverty and unemployment are often the painful results of such violations.

### Rights and Duties of Workers

Work brings with it both rights and responsibilities, ensuring that workers are treated with the respect they deserve while fulfilling their role in society.

The Rights of Workers include:

- **Fair remuneration:** Workers should receive wages that allow them to live with dignity and support their families.
- **Safe working conditions:** Protection from exploitation, unsafe environments, and excessively long hours is essential.
- **Time for rest and leisure:** Workers should have time for personal development, religious observance, and family life.
- **The right to unionise:** Workers should be able to freely form associations to advocate for their rights and pursue social justice.
- **Job security:** Economic policies must ensure full employment and job stability, guarding against the threat of unemployment.

At the same time, workers have certain duties:

- **Diligence and honesty:** Workers must perform their tasks conscientiously and refrain from damaging their employer's property or reputation.
- **Contributing to the common good:** Work should not be pursued for personal gain alone; it must benefit society at large..

### Social Responsibility and the Common Good

Employers and businesses are not just economic entities but must also prioritize human dignity over profit. Economic activities should promote solidarity, responsibility, and the common good, ensuring that enterprises contribute to a fair and just society.

The role of the state is critical in supporting the business environment by creating job opportunities, helping businesses during times of crisis, and ensuring that economic activity promotes equal opportunities for all. Businesses, too, must be viewed not just as "societies of capital goods," but as communities of people, with each member contributing in meaningful ways.

The principle of **subsidiarity** reminds us that development initiatives should not only address individuals' rights but also encourage the assumption of responsibilities. Society functions best when individuals, businesses, and governments work together to ensure shared prosperity.

### Towards a Spirituality of Work

The concept of work reaches beyond its material aspects, tapping into the spiritual dimension of human existence. When we approach our work with a sense of purpose and aim to serve others, we participate in God's creative work and draw closer to Him.

This spiritual approach to work can be understood in several ways:

- **Imitating God:** Just as God worked in creation and rested, we too are called to work diligently and take time to rest.
- **Linking work to the Cross and Resurrection:** All work involves some form of toil, yet this toil is part of the human journey on earth, a journey ultimately leading to a greater purpose.
- **Rest:** Traditional observances like the Sunday rest day help to restore relationships - with God, with ourselves, with others, and with the world. Taking time to recharge, whether through traditional or modern means, is essential for a balanced life.

True work is far more than just a way to pay the bills. It is an integral part of personal and societal development. By honouring the dignity of work, ensuring workers' rights, promoting social responsibility, and cultivating a spiritual connection to work, we can build a more just, compassionate, and prosperous world. In the end, it is up to each of us to bring this vision to life.

Be the change you want to see, be that change today.

## Guardians of Democracy

*"The fabric of democracy is always fragile everywhere because it depends on the will of citizens to protect it, and when they become scared, when it becomes dangerous for them to defend it, it can go very quickly"* (Margaret Atwood, novelist)

We live in dangerous times where wealth dictates what is right and what is wrong, what is true and what is false. We live in a world where those elected to serve act with arrogance and many times without any sense of ethics, morality and respect to their role in society—a role that demands servitude.

Locally ŻHN notes that there is an ever increasing tendency from the government of the day to resort to un-democratic behaviour. A case in point is the proposed changes to the law enabling ordinary citizens to request a magisterial inquiry.

We note that most of the proposed changes do not serve the nation and its citizens, but rather make it practically impossible for those in power, and those in close contact to those in power, to be held to account for their actions.

A democratically elected government must never hide behind legislation to avoid scrutiny and accountability. A government must above all listen to the will of the people, in particular to those whose presence places them in the position of an objective judgement and opinion on the matter. A government cannot act with a closed 'know it all' mentality. To govern one must listen. To govern one must be able to humbly acknowledge when they are wrong and not acting in the best interest of the nation.

Those that govern must always remember that it is the people that are the Guardians of Democracy not the government of the day. A government's role is to serve to the better interests of its citizens; and not to go out on a limb to please anointed few who promote themselves as saviours of the working class, only to profit on the sweat and labour of the worker.

## ŻHN Podcast Series

The second episode of our podcast series is now live.

In the second episode we are joined by Fr Jimmy, rector of St Aloysius College, and Anastasia, a member of the Sixth Form Student Council. Together we explore life at the College from multiple perspectives.



You can follow our podcasts on [Spotify](#) (search for Zghazagh Haddiema Nsara), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#) (search for zhn\_malta). New episodes will be posted regularly, so stay tuned.

Want to share your thoughts? Leave us a message in our social media channels, or drop us a message via email.



## Prayer Intention

Every month of the year the Pope encourages all faithful to pray as one family, the family of God, the Church, with a common intention. You can follow the monthly intentions in this [website](#).

The intention for this month is '**For Families in Crisis**'.

In a world where indifference can have the upper hand, we can easily forget the many challenges people around the world face on a daily basis.

One of these challenges is that of raising and living a family life. Family life brings with it moments of happiness, but also moments of tension which can bring relations to a breaking point, often resulting in differences that seem impossible to reconcile.

We need to be present for one another, we need to be understanding. We must ensure that while we respect a person's right to privacy, we are not indifferent to their pain, and in the silence of our hearts empathise with these families.

### Prayer of the month

"Let us pray that broken families might discover the cure for their wounds through forgiveness, rediscovering each other's gifts, even in their differences. "



## Jubilee of the Workers

A mass will be held at St. Joseph Worker parish in Birkirkara on the 1st of May at 9.30am. The mass will be led by auxiliary bishop Mons. Joseph Galea Curmi.

We encourage you to attend and spread the word. This mass is a means to celebrate our work life together as workers from all walks of life; it is a celebration of our positive contribution to society through the fruits of our labour.

## Jubilee of Teenagers

A group of 35 teenagers from the Ibragg youths group will be attending the Jubilee of Teenagers in Rome between the 25th and 28th of April 2025.

Lets keep these young people in our intentions so that this experience will be both enriching and an inspiration. A re-charge to hope that a better and fairer world is possible and is all theirs to build.

## ZHN Deep Dives

We are happy to introduce ZHN deep dives. In these deep dives we revisit some articles from the ZHN and bring them to life in the form of an audio based captivating conversation. Deep dives will be published in our website.

The first Deep Dive looks back at March 2024 where we had published an article based on the Lenten pastoral letter from our bishops. Head to our website '[zhnmalta.org](#)' to [listen](#) in.

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