



Chapter - 10

The dignity of labour and the use of wealth



- What is labour? Why should humans labour for?
- Is the wealth earned through labour by individuals meant solely for personal use?
- Can any means be adopted to accumulate wealth?

One of the most well-known parables in the Holy Scripture is the parable of the rich man, and Lazarus, described in Lk 16:19-31. The rich man, who lived as though he alone had the right to the fruits of his Labour, misused the wealth he had received (the lifestyle of I, mine, and only for me). That is why Jesus portrays him as being cast into eternal damnation.

The wealth we acquire through labour is not meant for our exclusive use. Instead, our Labour and wealth gain actual value when we become part of the activities that wipe away the tears of our brothers and sisters.

What is labour?

Labour is humanity's participation in God's work of creation. It is the effort individuals undertake to build the necessary conditions for human life without wasting the talents that God has invested in them. Through this process, humans can grow personally, contribute to the building up of society, and assist their fellow beings.

"Work is a good thing for man a good thing for his humanity because through work man not only transforms nature, adapting it to his own needs, but he also achieves fulfillment as a human being and indeed, in a sense, becomes more a human being" (The Dignity of Work 9).

The divine perspective of labour

Though the Lord created the universe before the creation of humanity, He entrusted it to humans to till and keep it (Gen 2:15). Holy Scripture also discloses that God calls the people of Israel to labour for six days of the week (Deut 5:13). This passage affirms that it is God's will for humans to work and sustain their lives through labour.



When Does labour become valuable?

"I never did anything worth doing by accident, nor did any of my inventions come by accident; they came by work."

Thomas Alva Edison



"Come to me, all you who labour and are burdened, and I will give you rest" (Mt 11:28).



Present Leo Tolstoy's famous short story "How much land does a man need?" in the classroom. Also, find answers to the following questions and discuss.

- 1) What common theme connects this short story and the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus?
- 2) What dangers does a man's greed for wealth lead to?

The divine perspective of labour lies in the fact that man can become a co-worker in God's act of creation.

- The universe and everything in it are divine creations.
- Whatever man discovers and integrates into the universe through his labour is an addition to what God has already created.
- Everything that has been discovered and is yet to be discovered in the world originates from the abilities that God has invested with the human being.
- Labour performed in union with Christ has a salvific dimension.

The human perspective of labour

It is the duty of a human being to live by his labour. This labour can be interpreted by two major dimensions.

1. Personal dimension

When a man works he not only alters things and society, he develops himself as well. A person acquires wisdom and develops skills through labour. Thus he is able to alter things and society and acquire personal development. Such personal development is superior to any material wealth one may accumulate in life (*Gaudium et Spes*, 35).

Individuals who believe they can acquire wealth without labour set a harmful example for society and future generations. Such thoughts lay the foundation for economic crimes in society. These individuals deprive themselves of the opportunity for personal growth through labour.

The Parable of the Talents, found in Mt 25:14–30, describes the condition of a person who buries his God-given abilities instead of using them for personal and societal good. In the parable, the servant who hid his talent is described as "wicked and lazy."

- Labour is the responsibility of a person to himself.
- The individual who enjoys the fruits and goodness of the earth has to reciprocate proportionately to the society he lives in.
- Labour allows each person to develop and also provides for one's sustenance.
- Individuals can explore various fields of work through the talents God has invested in them.

2. Societal dimension

From birth and through every stage of growth, a person relies on one's surroundings for survival. Humans are social beings who cannot grow in isolation. It is the duty of an individual to give



How can it be explained that Labour has a divine touch?



(Prov 16:3)



How do you regard the labour of your parents? Prepare a note appreciating the greatness of their labour and present it in class.



What are the major transformations that occur in both an individual and society through labour?



(2 Thess 3:10)



What is the reason for saying that labour has a human perspective?

back to society the goodness he has received from it through Labour, for the growth of the society. The fruits of each person's labour are a rightful share of society also. No one can exist alone. Everything we receive, including the food placed before us, results from the labour of an individual or a group of people.

Individuals and communities that recourse to laziness and unjust means of protests hinder a nation's progress.

Labour and the glory of God

The meaning and value of labour must be understood in relation to human dignity. As stated in the Book of Exodus: "I have filled him with divine Spirit, with ability, intelligence, and knowledge in every kind of craft" (Ex 31:3). When a human being demonstrates skill in work using the talents God has bestowed upon him, it is not only the individual who is glorified but also God, who has endowed him with these abilities.

Approach to labour

- Labour attains its proper dignity as a noble service when approached with respect and divine awareness.
- All jobs that contribute to human growth and well-being are honourable.
- Not all jobs become dignified merely because they generate profit or provide a livelihood.

Duty of the Nation

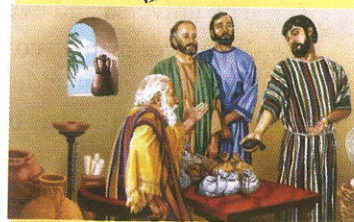
- Ensure opportunities and protection for doing dignified and just labour.
- Provide a fair wage and equal job opportunities without gender discrimination or partiality.
- Guarantee that the employer and the employees receive the deserving position.
- Secure the right of workers to engage in lawful and socially beneficial protests when their rightful claims are denied.
- Regulate unjust strikes and protest methods that jeopardize workplaces and eliminate job opportunities.

Utilization of Wealth

By understanding the true essence of wealth, we can accurately assess all aspects of earnings and use wealth wisely.

What is Wealth?

Wealth is not merely money or material possessions; knowledge and abilities man acquires can also be counted among them.



Read the Parable of the Talents from Mt 25:14-30.

Share within your respective class groups how you are utilizing the talents that God has invested in you. Are you currently using your talents in any service ministry associated with the Church?



(Prov 16:3)



What should be the proper attitude toward work? Why?



Study the questions of the Last Judgment (Mt 25:31-40).

Discuss and identify what you can do to put into practice the teachings presented in that passage and implement them.

The various intellectual, mental, spiritual, and physical abilities that God has given to humanity are referred to as wealth. By utilizing these abilities through labour, humans earn and increase wealth.

The Christian perspective on wealth

- Since wealth is given by God, its true creator is God. It is a gift from God meant for all; individuals acquire wealth through the talents God has bestowed upon them. Humans are merely stewards of wealth.
- Wealth should always be acquired justly, with fairness toward God and humanity.
- While acquiring wealth is necessary, the ultimate goal in the life of a human being should be eternal life.
- The fullness of wealth is the goodness that happens when it is shared with the poor.
- Every person has the right to acquire wealth through labour.

Unjust Acquisition of Wealth

Wealth obtained through dishonest means or without labour is not righteous in the eyes of God. In fact, such action can distance us from experiencing salvation.

"Like the partridge hatching what it did not lay, so are all who amass wealth unjustly; in mid-life it will leave them" (Jer 17:11).

Taking bribes, hoarding goods, unfairly inflating prices, adulterating food products for profit, and similar actions are examples of unjust wealth accumulation.

The utilization of wealth

- Even though we acquire wealth by God's grace, it should not be misused. Instead, it should be used for the welfare of the family and society.
- A person who recognizes that it is by God's grace that one can work and acquire wealth, will never misuse wealth.
- The thought that "I have earned this wealth, so I will spend it as I please" is not Christian.
- Jesus tells the parable of the prodigal son (Lk chapter 15) to teach the danger of misusing wealth also. Along with the explanation of the merciful love of the father, he also reminds us in this parable that wealth should not be misused.
- Just as squandering wealth is wrong, so too is miserliness hoarding wealth without addressing genuine needs.



Identify unjust and potentially harmful forms of protest in the workplace from media sources and organize a discussion on the crises they create in society.



Explain the meaning conveyed by the term "wealth"?

Faith Our Spiritual Wealth

As Christians, the heritage of faith we inherit and the virtues we acquire through our lives form part of our spiritual wealth.

Through this, we receive a treasure to pass on the faith to future generations.



What are the key perspectives of the Christian view on wealth? Why does the Church consider the sharing of wealth to be important?

The things that are God's and the things that are emperor's

Jesus teaches that one must give to the emperor the things that are emperor's and to God the things that are God's without hesitation (Mt 22:21). This principle must be carefully observed in the use of wealth.

Why should we pay taxes?

- Paying taxes to the nation is the duty of every citizen.
- Paying taxes is a way of demonstrating obedience to authority.
- The taxes we pay are utilized by the authorities for the welfare of society. Tax revenue is utilized to implement societal development and national security.
- Individuals and institutions that fail to pay taxes properly are guilty before both the law and God.

Should we offer a share of our wealth to God?

The practice of dedicating a portion of wealth as an offering to God has existed since the Old Testament period, as is evident from Sacred Scripture.

In Exodus 25:2, the Lord speaks to Moses: "Tell the Israelites to take for me an offering; from all whose hearts prompt them to give you shall receive the offering for me." Those who were generous and inspired internally brought offerings into the presence of the Lord.

Individuals should always offer their share for divine purposes with the understanding that true offerings are made willingly. When individuals give their tithes joyfully, the land will be blessed (Mal 3:10-11).

In the Gospel of Mk 12:41-44, Sacred Scripture affirms that Jesus attributed great value to the widow's offering to the temple as she gave it wholeheartedly.

- Provide the necessary support for the church and the sustenance of its ministers.
- Extend assistance for the welfare of the poor and orphans in society.
- Support the movements of the Church dedicated to proclaiming the Gospel.

Wealth is a divine gift that supports one's existence and growth. It must be acquired through labour. Every individual has a duty to demonstrate to the world the greatness of labour.



Be mindful before squandering

Whenever you acquire or use any object, you must consider that it is a product of human labour. Remember that when you use, destroy, or spoil it, you are also destroying that creation and, in a way, consuming human life itself.



(Sir 17:22)



As a citizen, how do you become a part of the nation's reconstruction process when you pay taxes to the state?



Identify some areas where wealth is being misused and discuss possible solutions to address them.

My convictions



- The wealth given by God will be utilized for the well-being and progress of oneself, one's family, and society.
- Acquiring wealth without labour or through unlawful means is wrong.
- For wealth to become a blessing, it must be shared with those who deserve it.

Let us read the Word of God

Acts of the Apostles
Chapters 17-20



Let us illuminate our hearts

“Lay up your treasure according to the commandments of the Most High, and it will profit you more than gold” (Sir 29:11).



My Resolution

I will work diligently according to my ability. I will contribute a portion of my wealth to the nation (tax) and the charitable works of the Church.



Conduct a study on areas where wealth is acquired through unjust means and create a wall poster to present in the class-room.



Many people often say that God does not need wealth, so why do we offer vows and contributions to the church? Discuss in groups the understanding you have gained in this area through faith formation and present your insights.