



Week 4: Fixing the System

No matter how much effort and love we put into our individual work, if the system we are working within is broken and dysfunctional, we cannot do our best work. Our responsibility as Christians extends to transforming and improving systems (a.k.a. "social justice"), not just our own individual work.

The first reading this week from Isaiah recalls how God guides the pagan Cyrus the Great (founder of the Persian Empire) and his "system" to do his will. How can we put our wider systems to work for the common good and the Kingdom of God?

The spirituality of work encourages workers to try to improve situations and eliminate problems when possible.... "Sometimes I have to fight the institution in order to deliver education," Elizabeth Collins explains. "I suppose this a problem common to many occupations. I work in spite of the institution sometimes, rather than because of it."

Institutions need to be reformed for many reasons: inefficient procedures and bureaucratic paperwork, pay and benefit disparities, etc. This is not an easy task. It requires wisdom, right timing, social acumen, and good judgment. Most crucial to the reform of an institution is the cooperation among a group of like-minded workers.

From *The Spirituality of Work*
small group guide by William Droel



Catholicism does not call us to abandon the world, but to help shape it. This does not mean leaving worldly tasks and responsibilities, but transforming them. Catholics are everywhere in this society.

We are corporate executives and migrant farm workers, senators and welfare recipients, university presidents and day care workers, tradesmen and farmers, office and factory workers, union leaders and small business

owners. Our entire community of faith must help Catholics to be instruments of God's grace and creative power in business and politics, factories and offices, in homes and schools and in all the events of daily life. Social justice and the common good are built up or torn down day by day in the countless decisions and choices we make. This vocation to pursue justice is not simply an individual task - **it is a call to work with others to humanize and shape the institutions that touch so many people.** The lay vocation for justice cannot be carried forward alone, but only as members of a community called to be the "leaven" of the Gospel.

Everyday Christianity,
U.S. Bishops

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Short Videos

Three great videos: "Running a Business with Christian Values" tells the impressive story of Walker Mowers; "What Is Legal vs. What is Right"; "Catholic Women on Work and Faith."



More on Fixing the System

Additional quotes and questions to help you go a bit deeper.

Visit: <http://gospel.link/faithatwork4>