

Letter from Bulletin of September 1, 2002

THE TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Dear Parishioners,

Happy Labor Day Weekend! But what is it all about? Labor Day is pretty much seen as the last long weekend of summer, a time for families to gather, a time to clog the highways and fill picnic areas and backyards. As John McCutcheon puts it in his Labor Day song, reprinted in today's fold out, "Today too many have forgot the goals for which our parents fought." Labor Day first appeared as a "worker's holiday" planned for demonstrations by the Central Labor Union of New York City. It developed into a nationwide showcase of the strength and energy of the trade and labor organizations; then it became an annual national tribute to the contributions working people have made to the prosperity and well being of our nation. As recently as 1995 only 15% of American workers belonged to unions; given a certain element of corruption (recently overshadowed by that of large corporations) unions have a bad name in some circles and seem unnecessary in others. However, nearly every American worker has benefited greatly from the victories of the Labor movement. Of the kind of things that unions fought for and made possible, do any of them apply to you today? For example: the 40 hour work week, unemployment insurance, pensions, and workman's compensation? Some today ask if workers at Enron, WorldCom and Tyco are wondering whether there isn't still an important place for unions. Whether unions are the answer or not, the same old questions of justice in the workplace should haunt our Labor Day celebrations. Farmworkers in some areas of the country receive the same wages they did in 1978 (for example for every 72 pounds of tomatoes they pick – they get 20 cents: it would take two tons to make \$50 a day!); immigrant workers, who pay taxes, serve in the U.S military and work hard live in fear of deportation with no

opportunity to gain legal status; sweatshops are not a thing of the past in the U.S. today; the balance between HMO's, Insurance Companies, large Corporations and their employees and clients seems at least occasionally well out of whack! The lists could go on; perhaps for Labor Day you could develop a list of your own. Better still we all need to develop an awareness and conscience sensitive to the demands of justice that continue in our nation, society and world.

Last weekend we made tickets for the **September 27th Concert with John McCutcheon** available for the first time. OF the 700 tickets available 400 were sold almost immediately. They will be available after masses one more time next weekend as long as they last. Obviously we expect to sell out quickly – so check your calendar now.

It's hard to believe but the first anniversary of "**September 11th**" is almost here. For many of us it seems like it happened only a few brief weeks ago and the sorrow, shock and concern is still very much with us. Next weekend we'll have a brief remembrance at each mass; there will be a diocesan wide commemoration and prayer service on Sunday, September 8th at St. Isidores in Danville. The women and men of the Dominican Religious Order invite friends to begin a period of fasting and prayer for peace, starting today September 1st. For more information visit their website at www.dominicanfastforpeace.org.

Your Pastor,
Brian Joyce

P.S. A big thank you to our Youth Ministry and Clown Ministry that prepared and hosted our special Labor Day liturgy today at 9:15.

Labor Day (words & music by John McCutcheon & Si Kahn)

In school we learn the well-known names
The ones whose money was their fame
Who ran the railroads, bought the West
Today we mention all the rest
Who blazed the trail that brought us here
Whose family names we'll never hear
Who laid the track and dug the coal
The brain and muscle, heart and soul

Refrain:

Labor Day, Labor Day
September or the first of May
To all who work this world we say
Happy Labor Day

The ones who work behind the plow
The ones who stand and will not bow
The ones who care for the home and child
The ones who labor meek and mild
The ones who work a thousand ways
That we might celebrate this day
The ones who raise our cities tall
For those who labor, one and all (refrain)

In history books I often find
That children worked in mill and mine
No time to play, to learn, or grow
Just send'em in or down below
Today too many have forgot
The goals for which our parents fought
When I grow up I hope to be
As strong as those who fought for me (refrain)

Immigrant (words & music by John McCutcheon)

Refrain:

I am an immigrant I am a stranger in this place
Here both for the grace of God, go I
I am an immigrant
I have left everything I own
To everything I've known
I say goodbye

She said, "Give me your tired"

Lord, you know I'm weary
When she said "Give me your poor"
She's talking to me
One of your huddled masses
Yearning to breathe free
And I never have lost sight of
What this journey has been for
See how she lifts her lamp
Beside that golden door