



## Prayer Text for September 2022 JCoR Global Community Hour

Theme: “Decent work for all”

God of endless creative labor, bless each of us gathered here and all people with the opportunity to spend our one, precious life in work that is befitting of our dignity as creatures of God...

...work that enables us to express the unique gifts and wisdom that God has bestowed on us,

...work that enables us to hone, strengthen, and enrich those God-given gifts through dedicated practice, training, and mentorship,

...work that supports our growth and nurtures our creative spirit.

As we enter into a short meditation, you are invited to close your eyes if you wish...

Call to mind the last meal you ate. Picture each component, ingredient by ingredient. How many hands brought that meal to your table? Hands tilling soil; hands tending livestock; hands gathering harvest; hands stocking market shelves; hands selecting the ripest and most choice offerings; hands peeling, slicing, stirring, and seasoning to taste; hands collecting firewood, mining for coal, or extracting gas for cooking; hands carrying dishes to table and clearing them away; hands gathering up the remnants and carrying them to the place where they will ultimately be returned to soil, water, and air...

Imagine these hands held in yours. How do they feel? Who depends on them? Send love to these hands. Send them your gratitude.

Consider one piece of the clothing you are wearing. How many hands brought this garment to your body? Hands picking cotton or shearing sheep; hands mixing dyes or treatments; hands operating looms or sewing machines; hands folding and displaying; hands disposing of chemicals, dyes, or cloth scraps...

Imagine these hands held in yours. How do they feel? Who depends on them? Send love to these hands. Send them your gratitude.

Consider the device with which you have joined this gathering. How many hands brought this device to your desk? Hands mining the earth for the minerals that comprise the battery and microchip; hands deconstructing discarded devices to salvage their component parts; hands holding tools and operating factory machinery; hands examining and testing functionality; hands wrapping, packaging, and distributing; hands typing code and instruction manuals in several languages; hands operating planes, boats, and trucks; hands hauling away packaging material and industrial waste products...

Imagine these hands held in yours. How do they feel? Who depends on them? Send love to these hands. Send them your gratitude.

Reader 1: God, accompany those who toil without the satisfaction of living wages, safe working conditions, or sufficient opportunity to rest their bodies and minds. Help us, in all our works, to never lose sight of our own dignity and give us the courage to stand up for our rights to decent work. God, grant humility to those who have the privilege of earning a living through labor that ignites their hearts with passion and love, that they may seek and find partners, apprentices, and teachers who can share the load and transform our daily work into a legacy of justice, peace, and right relations that extends far beyond our short time on Earth.

Reader 2: God, open the hearts of those who would devalue the time and labor of others, who would exploit their lives and bodies for personal gain and profit. Speak truth into the ears of those making policy in governments, corporations, and institutions of every kind so that we may rebuild our human economy as one that honors people and the whole, planetary community on which we depend. Set their hearts on fire with a commitment to secure justice and decent work for every hand that reaches out for it.

Reader 3: God, strengthen our will to honor the laboring hands of the world, not only in these small breaths of love and gratitude, but also through habits of thoughtful consumption and reception of services. Strengthen our resolve to better understand and take into account the human contributions and costs of every purchase we make and every service we receive. All who partake in the poison fruits of exploitative labor are likewise degraded. In our search for “the good life,” guard us against forgetting that fullness of life is not something we cannot own as individuals but rather something, which can only be enjoyed as it flows freely through a community.

For all these hands that labor and those seeking labor, we pray: **Amen.**