



St Vincent
de Paul Society

England and Wales

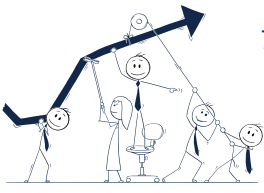
Turning Concern into Action

DIGNITY OF WORK





DIGNITY OF WORK



The Dignity of Work in Catholic Social Teaching declares that all humans have a right to work, safe working conditions and living wages. Workers have a right to organise and form unions. In turn, workers are responsible for giving a day of fair labour that works toward the common good of the society.

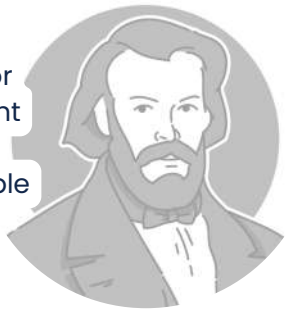
The SVP response

The SVP offers support to those who are out of work and provides opportunities to support individuals who want to volunteer in the interim. In some of our support centres those who are seeking asylum and have not been given the right to work volunteer and support the work of the centres. Some of our permanent staff started out as people we helped.

Founders Thought

Exploitation occurs when the master considers his workers not as a partner nor even as an assistant, but as an instrument out of which he must extract as much service as possible at the smallest possible price. Yet the exploitation of a man by another man is slavery.

-Blessed Frédéric Ozanam-



Genesis 2:15

“The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.”



Case Study: A letter of Thanks

Dear St Vincent de Paul

3 years ago I had nothing; no roof over my head, no money, no friends and no hope.

I slept in an empty wheelie bin in a church car park. You helped me find a home, you gave me someone to talk and you treated me like a human being.

The training in your café helped give me skills, confidence and I am now working again. I dread to think where I would be today if I hadn't walked into St Vincent's. I genuinely believe you saved my life.

David, Café Volunteer



'Work is fundamental to the dignity of the person. Work, to use an image, 'anooints' with dignity, fills us with dignity, makes us similar to God who has worked and still works, who always acts.'

Pope Francis, May 2013

Question Point

- Do you think these teachings about the dignity of work remain important?
- Can you think of or find examples where workers in the UK or across the world are treated unfairly e.g. due to gender or age?



DIGNITY OF WORK NOTES

DEFINE DIGNITY OF WORK:

The Dignity of Work in Catholic Social Teaching declares that **all humans have a right to work, safe working conditions and living wages.** Workers have a right to **organise and form unions.** In turn, workers are responsible for giving a day of fair labour that works toward the **common good** of the society.

THE SVP RESPONSE:

The SVP understands that work is integral practically and emotionally, it not only enables our physicals needs, it provides purpose and support in our lives. That is why the SVP supports those who **are out of work,** empowering those **in work to exercise their rights,** as well as as those who are seeking asylum and have **not been given the right to work.**

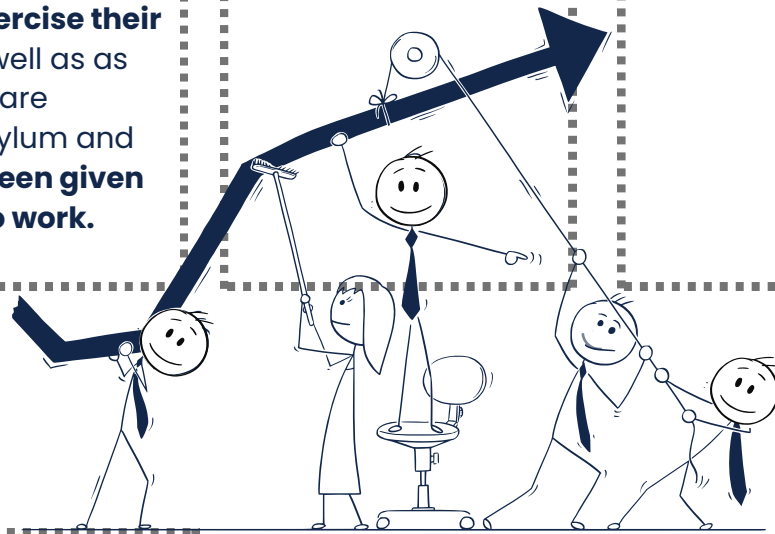
QUOTE:

'Knowledge of the poor and needy is not gained by pouring over books... but by visiting the slums where they live, sitting by the bedside of the dying, feeling the cold they feel...' **-Blessed Frederic Ozanam-**

BIT OF BIBLE:



Genesis 2:15
"The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it."



CASE STUDY: A letter of Thanks

This is a letter from David, an SVP Café Volunteer

'3 years ago I had nothing; no roof over my head, no money, no friends and no hope. I slept in an empty wheelie bin in a church car park. You helped me find a home, you gave me someone to talk to, and you treated me like a human being. The training in your café helped give me skills, confidence and I am now working again. I dread to think where I would be today if I hadn't walked into St Vincent's. I genuinely believe you saved my life.'

CONCLUSION:

The SVP demonstrate the principle of 'Dignity of Work' in their engagement with those in need of support with accessing the work market, in exercising their rights as workers to dignified work or engaging those who are unable to work in volunteer programmes. We see in David's case, how the SVP enabled him to regain his strength and confidence, as well as the skills to re-enter the work market to create a life of dignity, autonomy, and joy.