



# Honoring the Dignity of Work



**A Call for Solidarity with Florida's  
Farmworkers and Other Vulnerable Workers**

**FLORIDA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE**

**Dedicated to**

**Most Reverend John J. Nevins, DD**  
Bishop of the Diocese of Venice, Florida

*A persistent advocate and loving pastor  
of farmworkers and their families*

## From the Bishops of the Florida Catholic Conference

To parishioners and pastoral leaders, farmworkers, growers, business and government leaders, and to all people of good will in Florida:

In one of his first encyclicals, John Paul II reminded us that work is good and necessary to human dignity. Work exists *for* the human person. The person does not exist to work.<sup>1</sup> This teaching seems easy, when we look in the mirror. Surely we think our *own* work exists so that we can live fully human lives.

Does our perspective change, when we look out the window? As we see people in Florida harvesting vegetables, mowing our lawns, serving us in restaurants, or cleaning our offices, do those of us who are not doing those jobs recognize brothers and sisters in Christ, working to fulfill *their* God-given dignity? Or do we see “labor” working to make *our* lives comfortable, our food inexpensive, or our commerce more profitable?

We write this letter neither to point fingers nor to review well-known problems. As pastors, our purpose is to bring people together in a common moral consensus so that Floridians will no longer “look through our windows” without seeing the human persons working in our midst and without taking action to assure that people’s work, and their lives, have dignity and hope.<sup>2</sup>

We call upon individuals, corporations, institutions, government, and the Church herself to take concrete steps to promote freedom and justice for farmworkers and their families, and indeed for all Floridians in precarious occupations.<sup>3</sup>

### Dignifying Human Work

- Do our attitudes show respect for the dignity of work and of the human person? Or do we see not human persons, but “labor costs” or “illegals”?
- Do our laws and institutions protect workers? Or do we see human persons as a “workforce,” which exists to produce economic goods?
- Do we honor the “work of human hands”? Or do we accept as normal that many of Florida’s working poor can only afford to live in dilapidated rental trailers?

## OBSERVATIONS AND PRINCIPLES

In the fall of 2005, the Florida Catholic Conference invited some fifty experts from around the state and nation to a Farmworker Forum in order to listen to each other, without press or political agenda, and inform us with their diverse perspectives on agriculture and agricultural labor. Our recommendations in this letter draw liberally from the participants’ generous insights. We draw too upon our daily work as pastoral leaders whose staff ministers to people of every race, ethnicity and walk of life.

## Requirements of Justice

In our Catholic tradition, justice requires four principles: the God-given dignity of every human person, the common good, subsidiarity, and solidarity.<sup>4</sup> Guided by these principles, Floridians would not abide the status quo. We would take action in situations where, as John Paul II put it, we “are in a position to avoid, eliminate, or at least limit certain social evils.”<sup>5</sup> We would not “take refuge in the supposed impossibility of changing the world”<sup>6</sup> but rather, whether we are consumers, policymakers, workers, growers, or pastoral leaders, would work creatively for positive change.

## Progress and Stasis

In 1977, the Florida Catholic Conference issued its first document on farmworkers.<sup>7</sup> We have seen meaningful advances in the three decades since,<sup>8</sup> yet the problems of poverty and powerlessness described in that document remain familiar.

There is much that government could do—and that farmworkers and advocates have proposed many times—to improve the situation of farmworkers and their families. Some examples include:<sup>9</sup>

- Greater funding for migrant housing
- Stronger workplace safety regulations
- Larger budgets and greater political will to enforce existing labor laws
- Better training, for employers and workers, on labor rights and workplace safety
- Expanded redress through the civil courts for wage and safety violations
- Stronger regulation of subcontractors to ensure wage payments
- Formula-adjustments so that seasonal farmworkers can qualify for unemployment compensation.

## Who Is My Neighbor?

- **Two Guatemalan mothers**, pounding on a Tallahassee parishioner’s backdoor after escaping a sex-trafficking operation.
- **Farmworkers** with chronic rashes, respiratory ailments, and numbness, who wonder why there are funds for researching the impact of pesticides on animals and crops, but not on workers.
- **Farmworkers’ teenaged children**, in the only country they have ever known, who cannot afford a college education, because of an immigration status they did not choose and cannot change.
- **A woman from rural southern Mexico who speaks only an indigenous language**, isolated and alone with her children in a rural trailer, as her husband works the fields.
- **Single migrants**, living ten to a trailer in hot, condemnable conditions, charged rent sufficient for a home in suburbia.
- **Undocumented immigrants** cheated of their savings by unscrupulous persons who claim they can help to obtain drivers’ licenses or immigration documents.

Legal and regulatory changes have been difficult to achieve, in part because growers reject any new costs in an already precarious business. This is understandable economically. Morally, the desire to avoid regulatory burdens cannot justify neglecting or suppressing the human dignity of someone else. That said, government either cannot or should not solve all injustices--a point

### Signs of Global Times

- Citrus growers prioritize **mechanization**, hoping technology will give a competitive edge against Brazil.
- Citrus pickers worry that machines will harvest the most fruitful new groves, while workers pick lower-yield old groves.
- Florida towns debate day labor centers and politicians propose **divisive city ordinances**.
- Immigrants are discouraged that **English** classes are full, inaccessible without a car, or scheduled during work hours. Local citizens wonder why “those people” don’t learn English.

developed over centuries of Catholic teaching about *subsidiarity*.<sup>10</sup> By empowering workers to protect their own rights (through advanced safety and rights training; routine channels for two-way communication with employers; and collective bargaining), agricultural employers could reduce workers’ recourse to government interventions. On the other hand, because global markets pose constraints on growers and workers alike, an appropriate approach to progress may be through the marketplace.

### Florida Farmworkers in Global Times

Florida is, for geographic and other reasons, on the cutting edge of a dynamic globalization process. State and local policies are not isolated from this process. Global pressures are rapidly changing Florida agriculture. The Central American Free Trade Act (CAFTA) opens opportunity for some Florida businesses but creates more competition for others. Global concentration in the grocery, restaurant, and home store industries has created ever-larger and more demanding corporate customers for Florida’s growers and nursery owners. Growers fear that these powerful customers will turn to foreign suppliers rather than pay even small price increases to enable higher farmworker wages.

In this situation, the principle of *subsidiarity* is being turned upside down. Those at the top of the supply chain appropriate power and profits to themselves, while pushing risks and costs to the growers and farmworkers below.

Whether global trends will serve or undermine the principles of human dignity, subsidiarity, solidarity, and the common good is not up to an “invisible hand,” but to all of us. We urge public officials, growers, and farmworkers in Florida not to see themselves as objects of unalterable market logic, but rather as subjects,<sup>11</sup> who take action to create fair and universal conditions of work and trade.

We need much greater public discussion about the moral implications of our economic goals and practices. Let us be open to our global identity, as members of one human family. “We are our brothers and sisters’ keepers wherever they may be.”<sup>12</sup>

## Worker Participation

We presume that most agricultural employers are people of good will. Yet no matter how enlightened and benevolent their employers, human beings need a means to share in the decisions that affect their work. This is a matter of human dignity. In Catholic teaching, as developed by John Paul II: *“The right to work can be infringed when the farmworkers are denied the possibility of sharing in decisions concerning their services, or when they are denied the right to free association with a view to their just advancement socially, culturally and economically.”*<sup>13</sup>

We recognize that growers, who are already vulnerable to weather and markets, fear that worker organizations could mean work stoppages and a ruined crop. Self-preservation is a just end. It can and should be pursued with just means.<sup>14</sup>

Although welcoming workers' participation may feel risky, keeping workers subservient has risks as well. The abuses that appear in the news, tainting the reputation of an entire industry, are injustices that flourish *because* workers' organizations are weak, and workers fearful. Just as transparency promotes accountability in government, so too empowered workers would help reduce the shadowy spaces in which some unscrupulous people currently thrive. This would be for the common good.

## Immigration Status

Worker associations are only one tool farmworkers and other contingent workers need to defend their dignity. Another is the comprehensive reform of our immigration system, which we believe would serve the common good. Our nation should welcome people pursuing their human right to support their families, by providing sufficient visas to match the evident availability of jobs. All workers deserve access to common protections and benefits, such as unemployment compensation or Social Security disability.<sup>15</sup> No one should have to compete for a job with immigrants too vulnerable

## Hopeful Signs of Solidarity

- The **Coalition of Immokalee Workers, YUM!** and Taco Bell's **suppliers** agree to a process for ensuring higher wages and a worker-designed and monitored code of conduct.
- Farming and labor organizations work together for **comprehensive immigration reform**.
- The **Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association**, with state and local governments, partners with the **Diocese of Venice** on farmworker housing.
- The **Farmworker Association of Florida**, teamed with growers and scholars, designs economical hand-washing stations for nurseries and practical eye protection for citrus pickers.
- Florida's **Joint Legislative Commission on Migrant and Seasonal Labor** listens to farmworkers about housing, pesticides, and work conditions.
- Leading Florida growers construct new, dignified **housing** for migrant staff.
- Florida enacts stronger safety requirements for **farm labor vehicles**. Similar legislation is proposed in Congress.
- Parishes and schools enthusiastically support the first *Florida Catholic Long-Sleeved Shirt Relief* campaign.

to stand up for their human dignity. Importantly, a comprehensive approach is one that addresses the root causes of migration as well, because no human beings should have to emigrate just to live in dignity and support their loved ones.<sup>16</sup>

### Farmworkers Are Not Unique

While this letter highlights farm work and farmworkers, we would like to emphasize that today the “farmworker” community is not readily distinguished in its membership or vulnerabilities from people working in other contingent, manual labors. Labor flows among these industries are now common. In lieu of migrating with the crops, many of our parishioners are farmworkers during the harvesting season, but construction workers or home repairers during the off-season.<sup>17</sup>

Florida’s tourism, construction, home repair/hurricane recovery, and agriculture industries have certain common traits: labor intensive, seasonal, often reliant on labor contractors, and typically paying relatively low wages without benefits. The contractors and sub-contractors are under competitive pressure to offer clients the most services for the lowest price. Their clients can easily deny knowledge of the methods that were used to fulfill the contract.

The worst problems at the margins of the agricultural industry also arise in other industries: trafficking in human persons, servitude to pay off smuggling debts, overcrowded and substandard housing, seven-day workweeks, unaccompanied minors, sexual harassment and exploitation, and contractors who skip town without paying wages.

### WHAT FLORIDIANS CAN DO

#### Love Our Neighbors; Befriend the Stranger

Nearly every farmworker in Florida is part of an ethnic or racial minority group. While most were born in Mexico or Central America, others migrated from Haiti or southeast Asia, and some are U.S.-born, including African Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Mexican-Americans. Our Gospel impels us to see each one as our neighbor—as Christ in our midst—and then to reach out in love, without regard to our differences (Matthew 25:35; cf., Ephesians 2:19).<sup>18</sup>

Cultural differences easily obstruct solidarity. If one has always been in the majority, it can be difficult to understand the ties that bind people to their own traditions or to appreciate the challenge of deciphering an unfamiliar culture or of learning a second language. Differences also cause

#### To Build Solidarity Across Difference:

- Treat **multicultural sensitivity** as an essential skill for ministry in any Catholic institution.
- **Train** staff for loving, clear communication within a multicultural Church.
- **Make inclusion the rule:** issue program announcements in the major languages of the diocese and provide interpretation whenever feasible.
- Invite parishioners and parish staff to **study and discuss *Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity*** (USCCB, 2000).

miscommunications, which frequently go undetected. As our staffs in multicultural ministry know well, people rely on their *own* language, habits, and experiences to interpret, often inaccurately, what others say and do. Stereotyping and self-righteousness tend to follow.

Loving our neighbor involves taking steps to communicate despite our differences; but a loving response does not seek to erase difference. Culture, language, race and ethnicity, and life experiences inform a person's identity. While moving to a new country requires adaptability to new customs, we should not expect immigrants to discard their very selves as they cross the border. To the contrary, let us invite them to share the richness of their own backgrounds in order to contribute to the common good of our communities.<sup>19</sup> Most farmworkers are first and foremost not victims but hard working, risk-taking, family-devoted persons with many gifts to share, if we open our hearts to them.

Among our own attempts to deepen cross-cultural solidarity in the Church is the requirement that each seminarian at St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary learn to administer the sacraments in a second language. Diocesan and parish ministries in Florida provide sacramental and educational ministry in some sixteen languages. Let us continue to see and act to build solidarity within our Church!

**“See where love is needed and act accordingly”**

- Donate to/Volunteer for farmworker ministry in your diocese.
- Find out about the campaigns of Florida farmworkers' own organizations and discern appropriate ways to support them.
- Support growers and non-profits when they initiate new farmworker housing projects in your community.

**In Our Parishes**

Pope Benedict XVI recently wrote that the Christian program is to cultivate a heart that “*sees where love is needed and acts accordingly.*”<sup>20</sup> Our hearts need to see the risks and labors of rural life. We need to see the human consequences of our demands for unblemished produce at very low prices. We need to accompany migrant farmworkers on their journeys—spiritually, materially, and emotionally.

Parishioners will “see where love is needed” and will identify actions to take, when pastoral leaders open parishioners’ eyes and ears by inviting farmworkers and growers to speak and to share their stories. Thanksgiving and Farmworker Sunday<sup>21</sup> are ideal opportunities for teaching this.

Florida’s parishes should develop regular occasions—of liturgy, fellowship, and service—for cross-cultural interaction and learning. Possibilities include: celebrating the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of all the Americas; offering parish-level classes in English, but also in Latino cooking or Haitian music; organizing parish youth to experience farm labor by gleaning the fields; or having an assembly to explore different conceptions of time and the roots of cultural traditions.

To support justice and cultivate an attitude of solidarity, parishes might also consider whether or not their purchases support global and workplace justice and help to strengthen rural communities. Are there local family businesses and farm markets from which to purchase food for parish events or plants for the sanctuary? Does the parish purchase union-picked produce where available? Does the parish serve fair-trade coffee after Mass? Does it sell fair-trade handicrafts at the Christmas bazaar, so that artisans in the developing world can support their families without migrating from their home villages?<sup>22</sup>

### In our Homes and Families

The issues raised here are complex, even global. What can individual Floridians do to show solidarity with farmworkers and other contingent laborers and their families?

The first step is prayer, which makes us mindful of our blessings, of others' needs, and of our obligations to act in solidarity with others. We urge families at every meal to thank God for their food *and* for the unseen work of growers' and farmworkers' hands.

A second step is to study the issues raised here in order to form a conscience that understands the dignity of human persons, the meaning of dignity in human labor, and the ethics of the modern food system. The National Catholic Rural Life Conference has outlined well the "Catholic rural ethic."<sup>23</sup> Specific Florida issues can be best understood by taking time to know and listen to farmworkers and growers. The Florida Catholic Conference Farmworker Solidarity website includes many useful resources.

Individuals and families can offer solidarity by initiating or supporting the parish-level activities identified above, and by:

- Writing to public officials and editorial pages to support policies that dignify workers, enhance the security of Florida growers, promote rural communities, and create accountability in the food system;
- Seeking out local farm markets, so as to support a sustainable food system based on fresh, seasonal, organic produce;
- Cultivating justice in our attitudes and in the opinions we express. Solidarity with our neighbor requires thinking not only about the costs we pay to get a product to our homes, but also the human costs that others pay to produce it.

### Act...with Commitment to Participation

- Respect workers' capacity to set their own priorities. When donating to farmworker organizations, avoid imposing restrictions on the gift.
- Solidarity means walking side by side. Listen to workers' priorities and fully include farmworkers in any plans to address their community's needs.
- Schedule meetings and events after work hours.
- Religious foundations and other donors can empower grassroots organizations by simplifying grant processes.

## Throughout the Catholic Church in Florida

As farmworker organizations call our attention to the links between their situation and larger corporate processes, it would be well for major Catholic institutions, such as hospitals or universities, to look further at the ways that they, as employers, stockholders, or bulk purchasers, might be “in a position to avoid, eliminate, or at least limit certain social evils”<sup>24</sup> in the food system. In a world where corporations increasingly acknowledge their social responsibilities and see responsible practices as the most sustainable ones, shareholders and large customers *are* in a position to promote a more ethical vision of work.

Many of our Church’s institutions already have policies for socially responsible investment.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, Catholic institutions are founding and continuing supporters of the Florida Community Loan Fund, which invests in non-profit community development organizations in Florida. As our Farmworker Forum participants made clear, to make such policies more effective, socially responsible decisions—in investing, purchasing and human resources—should also be part of the job descriptions of directors and fiscal officers at Catholic dioceses, universities, and hospitals. Recognizing that each decision to support a boycott, choose a supplier, or join a shareholder resolution requires specific analysis, we call upon institutional leaders to plan for making such decisions by putting principles for socially responsible investing, purchasing and hiring into their written policies.

Catholic schools and universities should provide opportunity to farmworkers’ children and undocumented immigrant youth through admissions, mentoring, and scholarship programs. Too many talented children of farmworkers look ahead to a future with no work authorization or means to finance college. Discouraged, they drop out of school early, resigned to a life of struggle like their parents.

## In the Fields and the Marketplace

Florida’s farmworkers and growers have good reasons to join cause. Similar to farmworkers, growers are vulnerable to the people who write their checks—in this case, their customers, who are increasingly distant, transnational corporations demanding the lowest price, regardless of what it takes the supplier to provide it. We call upon retailers, food processors, and other buyers of Florida agricultural products to identify and acknowledge their contribution to the injustices “down the supply chain” and to work jointly with suppliers and workers to make concrete improvements in farmworkers’ terms of employment.

As a society, we must work to acknowledge, and then to reduce, the extreme differences in status and power that create what are called, in theological terms, “near occasions of sin”—situations where it is too easy to act unjustly toward those who are weaker than we are.

We applaud the agricultural leaders and public officials who took the risk of attending our Farmworker Forum where they were on equal terms with farmworkers’ leaders. These conversations should be routine, for they build mutual respect among participants. We urge retailers as well to join these conversations.

An effective system of worker participation will require new attitudes on everyone's part. In a spirit of reconciliation, we urge all parties to judge each other by current experience and effort and to avoid prejudicing their actions today on the basis of past injuries or anecdotal experiences.

A healthy, well-trained, justly paid workforce is good for workers *and* provides stability, loyalty, and efficiency for employers. Growers and their associations should not "circle the wagons" in the face of farmworkers' concerns, but rather, should set high standards for their own peers and put a priority on creating conditions for a more stable, year-round workforce. The Florida agriculture industry's interest in certifying growers who meet codes of conduct is encouraging. Farmworkers must be full partners with growers, in designing and monitoring standards, in order for codes of conduct to serve their mutual need for clarity and fairness.

The current labor contracting system offers too many opportunities for exploiting people's poverty and insecurity. Contracting should not be used as a means to avoid responsibility for employment conditions or as a way to circumvent workers' organizations. The most abusive contractor may appear reliable and efficient to an indifferent employer. We call upon all who use contract labor to have the moral curiosity to find out if the price they pay is too good to be true.

### **In the Public Sphere**

The following brief comments expound on our experience working with policy makers and farmworkers in Florida and on the recent statements of our United States Conference of Catholic Bishops,<sup>26</sup> as they apply to Florida.

Public officials and regulators should recognize that **"no complaints" does not mean "no problems."** The workplace culture and the insecurity of their work and immigration status tend to discourage farmworkers from speaking up. Without green cards, most workers will avoid authorities. As well, many workers come from countries where bureaucracies are perceived as corrupt and unhelpful. A proactive and culturally sensitive approach will yield the most accurate view of farmworkers' concerns, to those who would ask.

Florida's government is investing heavily in high-tech development to reduce dependence on low-wage tourism and agriculture. These changes can serve the common good, to the extent that we equally distribute **access to opportunities in the "new economy"** and dedicate necessary resources to help growers, workers, their families, and their rural communities adjust to changing conditions.

We support policies to enable the aspirations of the children of immigrant working families, such as using attendance and graduation from Florida high schools as the basis for **"in-state" tuition** rates at public colleges and universities.

Like Church entities (discussed above), state and private pension funds should institute **socially responsible investment** policies.

Affordable **housing** should continue as a high public priority, in consultation with representatives of the populations to be served.

**Disaster preparedness.** The state of Florida is a leader in disaster preparation and response. We could further this leadership by raising awareness about the special obstacles and limitations facing low wage and immigrant laborers. With some advanced preparation, local agencies, public officials and farmworkers can develop trust and mutual understanding to make the emergency response more effective. The FCC has begun this process through a pilot program in two communities.

Florida's leaders should consider the human ramifications of the **trade policies** they support, including the impact on growers and farmworkers in the United States and abroad. Florida's leaders should advocate with federal officials for anti-trust provisions in international law, in order to reduce market distortions that harm growers and farmworkers.

As a state with one of the most labor-intensive agriculture industries, Florida needs innovative approaches to **stabilize the agricultural labor market**. More year-round, full-time work would enable farmworkers to earn higher annual incomes and settle into our communities and could create stronger employer-employee relationships.

**Food security. Rural sustainability.** The principle of subsidiarity encourages self-sufficiency. Florida's economic development agenda should value and support its agricultural industry, our capacity to feed ourselves, and our rural communities. Government should help agriculture to respond to global pressures creatively, without adding to workers' burdens.

**Health and Safety.** Respect for the dignity of the worker entails caring for his or her health and safety as one would care for one's own. Respect for the dignity of the grower requires setting and enforcing standards that are clear and workable. Consistent with these goals would be policies for: better pesticide training of growers and workers; better communication between safety inspectors and farmworkers; more resources for enforcement by culturally-sensitive, bi-lingual inspectors; funding for research on pesticide, ergonomic, and accident issues in farm labor; and implementation of new policies and practices in light of the research.

**Non-immigration officials** (including law enforcement and social service providers) **should not have immigration responsibilities**. Immigration rules are far too complex. Inadequately trained officials readily make errors that harm legally-present immigrant families.

**All Floridians  
Experience Hurricanes...  
Not All Experience *Disaster***

- As day laborers in older housing, farmworkers tend to lose home *and* income because hurricanes ravage trailers and fields.
- Given our broken immigration system, most Florida farmworkers do not qualify for state disaster unemployment insurance or for certain federal emergency assistance programs.
- Low-income workers have little insurance, savings, or in the case of recent immigrants, social capital to help their recovery.

In the absence of significant reforms in the federal immigration system, we support state and local statutes that **treat Florida residents equally, regardless of immigration status**, in matters such as drivers' licenses.

Law enforcement and other public servants need leaders, training and policies that **ensure respect and protection for minority and rural populations**.

**Continue steps to integrate immigrants into our communities and reduce isolation.** To create respect and appreciation for cultural contributions of newcomers and to hasten integration with American culture, the common good would be served by more funding for bi-lingual personnel and for classes in English, cultural adjustment, and life skills.

### *THE CALL TO SOLIDARITY*

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus sees and takes time to show compassion and concern for those whom others in his society, even his apostles, would pass by—the Samaritan woman, children, beggars, lepers, and tax collectors.

In the Gospel of Matthew (25:31-46), Jesus warns of people who believe they are righteous, yet fail to see and love the human persons at the margins of their society. Our faith tradition tells us that we have a moral obligation to see the least of our brothers and sisters in our midst and, like the Good Samaritan ministering to a stranger in need, to respond in love and solidarity.<sup>27</sup>

Real love and solidarity are grounded on respect for the other's *equal* human dignity. Farmworkers are people who do very hard labor, very fast, in difficult conditions. They have often risked their lives to travel far from home in order to support their families. They do not need condescension or sympathy. They need, first and foremost, respect for their human dignity. Right relationships in the workplace and the community will follow.

As well, our own human dignity requires that we be *active and responsible subjects* of our lives,<sup>28</sup> not blind consumers, ignorant and unconcerned about the labor and market processes that sustain our human needs. All of us have a responsibility to see the situations in our midst and to support change.

December 12, 2006  
Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe  
Patroness of the Americas

## ENDNOTES

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1. *On Human Work* (Washington DC: United States Catholic Conference Publishing Services, 1981), 14.

2. On the Church's role "to proclaim the Gospel in the context of society," see Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 2nd ed.* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005), sections 62-71, and Benedict XVI, *God is Love* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006), section 28a.

3. On the meaning of human freedom, see *Compendium*, esp. sections 135-37 and 199-200. On the concept of justice, see *Compendium*, sections 201-203.

4. See *Compendium*, section 160ff.

5. John Paul II, *Reconciliation and Penance* (December 2, 1984), section 16.

6. *Reconciliation and Penance*, section 16.

7. *Determining Our Destiny: Agriculture and Farm Labor in Florida* (Tallahassee: Florida Catholic Conference, 1977).

8. Some of those advances include: the demise of dangerous hand-labor in the sugar fields; the Redlands Christian Migrant Association's creation, with support from growers' organizations, of a network of quality child-care facilities; the emergence of effective farmworker organizations and supportive advocacy groups; the growth of the horticulture industry in central Florida that provides stable, year-round jobs; and the availability of some state funding for farmworker housing projects.

9. Cf. *For I Was Hungry & You Gave Me Food: Catholic Reflections on Food, Farmers, and Farmworkers* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2004), 20-24.

10. "In accordance with the principle of *subsidiarity*, neither the state nor any larger society should substitute itself for the initiative and responsibility of individuals and intermediary bodies." *Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd edition* (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1997), section 1894. See also sections 1883 and 1884.

11. On the subjectivity of human work in the writing of John Paul II, see *Compendium*, sections 270-75.

12. Administrative Committee of the USCCB, *Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility* (Washington, DC: USCCB Publishing, 2003), 15.

13. *On Human Work*, section 21.

14. Cf. John Paul II, *On Social Concern* (Washington DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1987), section 37.

15. Robert Williams, Migrant Farmworker Justice Project, provided evidence at the FCC's Farmworker Forum in September 2005 that Florida farmworkers' income would increase substantially if they could qualify for unemployment compensation, Earned Income Tax Credits, and other programs for authorized workers.

16. This teaching is elaborated in various documents including the joint statement of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Conferencia del Episcopado Mexicano, *Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope* (Washington, D.C.: USCCB, 2003) and our own March 2006 statement, "Hear the Immigrants' Cries for Justice."

17. Moreover nowadays, young people are not staying in farm work for long. Turnover is high, creating uncertainty and retraining costs for growers.

18. For more detailed examination of the Scriptural call to welcome the stranger and the pastoral response, see *Strangers No Longer*, chapters 2 and 3, respectively.

19. Cf. *Strangers No Longer*, 5-9.

20. *God is Love*, section 31b.

21. Liturgical and educational ideas for Farmworker Sunday are at [www.flacathconf.org/farmworkers](http://www.flacathconf.org/farmworkers).

22. One way to do this is through the Catholic Relief Services Fair Trade program. See [www.crsfairtrade.org](http://www.crsfairtrade.org).

23. See "A Catholic Rural Ethic for Agriculture, Food and Community," [www.ncrlc.com/ruralethic.html](http://www.ncrlc.com/ruralethic.html).

24. *Reconciliation and Penance*, section 16.

25. Cf. United States Catholic Conference of Bishops, *Socially Responsible Investment Guidelines* (Washington, DC: Office of Finance/Accounting Services, 2003).

26. Cf. *Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2000), *Strangers No Longer*, and *For I Was Hungry and You Gave Me Food*.

27. Cf. *God is Love*, section 31a.

28. Our vision of the human person is one of "an *active and responsible* subject of his own growth process, together with the community to which he belongs," *Compendium*, section 133.



**DIRECT QUESTIONS TO:**

**Florida Catholic Conference  
201 W. Park Avenue  
Tallahassee, FL 32301-7715  
(850) 222-3803  
[www.flacathconf.org](http://www.flacathconf.org)**

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