

Week 2-The problem of unemployment

Opening hymn (Lenten hymn)

Opening prayer

Merciful Father, send forth your Spirit upon us the people of Southern Africa. May we hear anew the voice of Jesus Christ, inviting us to walk with him across the turbulent waters of our time: "Courage, it is I. Do not be afraid."

By the grace of the Holy Spirit empower us to bring comfort to the restless, hope to those who despair, healing to victims of violence and reconciliation where there is division.

May the Holy Spirit heal our families and communities. Grant us ethical and courageous leaders who put the good of the people before their own interest.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to speak the truth with courage, to act justly in all we do, to share with those in need, and always and everywhere to respect your gift of life as we strive to proclaim the values of the Kingdom in solidarity with all people of good will. Amen.

Brief Introduction

One of the problems we are facing in the three countries is the high levels of unemployment.

The role of the government and politicians

How satisfied are you with the way the government is handling unemployment? What more should the government do to end unemployment?

Our role as ordinary citizens and as Christians

Is there a role that we as ordinary citizens and Christians can play to address the problem of unemployment?

Sharing our personal experiences

Share an experience of a breadwinner losing a job or struggling to find a job. How have we reached out to the Lord for healing and hope in the midst of such experiences?

Share an experience of young people in your family struggling to find a job after finishing high school or college. When the government fails to create jobs, some pursue livelihoods through self-employment. What has been your experience of people trying to start small businesses and pursue self-employment?

Being challenged by the Gospel and the Catholic Social Teaching

In our Catholic tradition, work (either through self-employment or being employed by another) is more than just the way to earn a living. Work is one of the ways we participate in the ongoing work of God's creation in our world. "Created in the image of God, we are given the mandate to transform the earth. When we work, we share in God's work of creation. Through our work, we are unfolding the Creator's work and contributing to the realization of God's plan on earth" (Pope Saint John Paul II, *On Human Work*, 1981, #25) How does this notion of work challenge you?

Read Matthew 25:35-40. As my country faces economic crisis and unemployment crisis, what am I doing to help others who are less fortunate?

Action

As an act of repentance, what can I (we) do this week in line with the above sharing?

"Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28-30) As the country faces unemployment crisis, what is the healing that I and my family need to ask from the Lord? What is the healing that we need as a nation?

Spontaneous prayers

Allow time for those who wish to make a petition in prayer on behalf of the group. Our Father ... Hail Mary ...

Closing Prayer

God of love show us our place in this world as channels of your love for all the creatures of this earth, for not one of them is forgotten in your sight. Enlighten those who possess power and money that they may avoid the sin of indifference, that they may love the common good, advance the weak, and care for this world in which we live. Amen.

St. Francis of Assisi. Pray for us. Blessed Benedict Daswa. Pray for us