

Prayers for Worker's Memorial Day

Workers Memorial Day is

Is on April 28th and may be celebrated on the nearest Sunday, which this year falls on 26th April 2020. A day for **remembering** those who have died as a consequence of work-related accidents and diseases, And for reminding ourselves to **work for improved occupational health and safety** so these tragedies are not repeated again.

It started

In 1985 when public service workers in Canada made the day a day of mourning.

It is international

It is marked in some way in nearly 100 countries worldwide.

It is officially adopted by the governments of Canada, Spain, Thailand and Taiwan.

It is adopted by the International Labour Organisation.

The chief sponsors are Trade Unions

But health and safety at work can only improve if everyone in the workplace collaborates. Chaplaincy teams can also get involved.

Why bother?

Because the death toll from work-related causes is huge;-

In the UK about 10,000 people each year from work-related diseases, and 400+ in work-related accidents.

Add 1000 work-related road deaths and there are 11-12,000 deaths in all (*figures from around 2000*).

Worldwide, the total is over a million each year.

And each death is a personal tragedy for someone.

In 2020

During a global COVID-19 virus pandemic thousands have people have died doing their jobs, in health services and in social care and other vital supporting industries, driving buses, working in shops or distribution centres and in almost every country.

The ribbon

The purple ribbon is called a “forget-me-knot” and is a reminder of the day and of all those lives. So if you see someone wearing it, you know what it means.

Some suggested bible readings...

Romans 12:15-18

15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.

16 Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are.

17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all.

18 If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

A story...

There can be another way...

... "look at my hands"

Ann Morisy tells the story of the report by the Director of a large missionary society who told a conference how much effort his society had put in to opening a modern hospital in the Philippines. There had been a splendid opening service and a speech by the government representative who praised and thanked the society for its work. There was a tour of the much acclaimed accident and emergency department during which the first patient was carried in. It was a young boy about 13 years old. He had got his hand caught in factory machinery. His frantic efforts to free his trapped hand had led to him trapping his other hand. The boy was admitted to the hospital having lost both hands. The Director was courageous enough to ask the question whether the missionary society had chosen appropriately in investing all its resources in the hospital. Perhaps the wiser priority might have been to provide guards for factory machinery and campaigns for improved safety laws.

In a group, or alone, look at hands; those of group members or from photographs. Reflect on what they do. End by joining them together, holding hands if this is possible, for several minutes.

Some prayers:

you may like to choose one or more of these prayers depending on your situation

(I)

God of love,
we remember today all those who have died
in accidents at work,
or because of diseases contracted at work.

We remember particularly
those who have died with COVID-19,
medical workers, carers, bus drivers,
shop workers and many many others;
each one a son or daughter,
husband or wife, father or mother,
grandparent.

In the silence, we remember them...
...with thankful and grieving hearts,
we remember them.

We pray about the future,
and ask that everyone who sets off for work
may come home again safe and healthy.
Strengthen those who seek to make the work place a safe place.
Give wisdom and a care for human life to all.
And in these days where it's hard to know what to do for the best,
and safety equipment is hard to come by,
then God strengthen us all,
and heal the rifts in our relating
which are exposed in times of difficulty.
Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

(<https://boobjanet.org.uk/bobsblog/> 21.04.2020)

(II)

In a time of pandemic

we pray for those who have the responsibility to keep workers safe;
safe in hospitals, in care homes, on buses, in factories and shops,
in all places where people work.

We pray for those who mourn family and friends who have lost their lives in such places
serving other people.

At a time of global grief and loss

help us commit ourselves to remember and in due time

ask the questions that will ensure they did not give their lives in vain.

Lord in your mercy

hear our prayer.

(III)

Living God, we offer you our prayers

for those whose jobs put them in danger.

We think of the jobs we know are dangerous;-

in fishing, mining, the construction industry:
and we ask you to protect people doing them.

We pray for people working in the transport industry,
that drivers of lorries, cars, buses, taxis may be safe,
and they may respect the safety of all those
they share the roads with.

We pray for workers in other industries,
that they may overcome the hazards of their trades.

We pray for people working in their homes,
that they and their families may be safe
from choking dust and cuts and burns
and strained backs and eyes and minds and tempers.

God protect them all we pray.

We pray for those who strive to keep them safe:

make them strong and courageous to stand up for what is right.

And when people's work has brought them low
through illness or injury,

may they find

some kind of healing, some kind of strength and hope.

(IV)

We pray for those who mourn

because someone they loved

has died because of their work or of an injury or occupational disease:

may your words come true;-

*"Blessed are those who mourn,
for they shall be comforted."*

In the silence, we remember people known to us
and to our community.

...silence...

We thank you for their lives

and depend on you

for a new hope, a new life, a new beginning:

through Jesus Christ our Lord...