

## A Little Light: Monday Musings with Mary Sue



### Happy Labor Day!

As a child, as long as I can remember, before we could go to my Grandma's for Thanksgiving dinner, my parents would take all six of us kids to Inland Steel to deliver huge boxes of donuts. My dad, a mechanical engineer, would put a hardhat on each of us, and we would walk around giving each person a donut. My dad firmly believed that those who do the labor on days when many others are off, needed to be remembered and sacrifices made for them. I clearly recall their faces, so thankful and touched by the small act of kindness. In our own way, my husband and I have tried to instill this value in our son as well.

As we celebrate Labor Day, we can also turn to our **Catholic Social Teaching** which upholds the **Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers**: *The economy must serve people, not the other way around. Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation. If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected—the right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to the organization and joining of unions, to private property, and to economic initiative.*

I am grateful for the wisdom of our faith and my parents witness by instilling in me the respect of all those who labor.

**FACT:** Labor Day became a federal holiday in 1894. Labor Day was one of the results of the Industrial Revolution in our country's history; during that time the average American worked twelve hour days and seven days a week in order to make a meager living. Even though there were rules in many states, children as young as five or six years old worked in factories, mines and mills across the country. Also, many of these workers, mostly the very poor, old and the recent immigrants were often made to work in unsafe conditions, with little access to fresh air, sanitary facilities and breaks. Labor unions began to grow as manufacturing began to surpass farming as the source of American employment, with strikes and rallies organized to protest the poor working conditions and to negotiate hours and pay. On Tuesday, September 5, 1882, ten thousand workers took time off without pay to march from City Hall to Union Square in New York City, holding the first Labor Day parade in the history of our country.

**LINK: 16 Tons (Tennessee Ernie Ford)** : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RRh0QiXyZSk>

Have a great week.

Blessings,

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