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Two Must-Reads on Labor

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Distinctly Catholic

Yesterday, the Washington Post had two great, must-read op-eds on labor.

Harold Meyerson makes the point that, compared to other countries, America's economy penalizes workers when the economy tanks and does not reward them with higher wages when it flourishes. Money quote: "Only a purblind ideologue could miss the pattern here. American employers -- more than employers in other nations and more than American employers in earlier downturns -- have imposed the costs of the recession and, increasingly, the costs of doing business, on their workers, and kept for themselves damn near all the proceeds from doing business."

E. J. Dionne notes the historic role of labor unions in enhancing the dignity of workers and improving working conditions, and therefore social stability, for all Americans. If you just enjoyed the weekend, thank a union. Many of the labor leaders of the past, such as Terrence Powderly and Walter Reuther, were deeply influenced by their Catholic faith. It is a scandal that more Catholics are not more upset that America has become a nation where it is virtually impossible to organize workers, a right that has been at the heart of Catholic social teaching since Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* was issued almost 120 years ago.

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