FROM DIRTY WORK TO GOOD WORK: A CATHOLIC BUSINESS LEADER'S PERSPECTIVE ON TRANSFORMING THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCT OF DIRTY WORK TO HUMANIZING WORK[1]

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Abstract. In December 2024, the Philippine employment rate exceeded 95%, yet 57% of Filipinos still considered themselves poor. High employment conceals the prevalence of "bad jobs" marked by low wages, informality, and social stigma—what sociologist Everett Hughes termed *dirty work*—work society deems disgusting or degrading. This article examines *dirty work* through the lens of the Catholic business leader seeking an integrated life of faith and stewardship guided by Catholic Social Teaching (CST). It asks: How does dirty work evolve into dehumanization? Which CST principles respond to it? And how can these guide Filipino business leaders toward humanizing work? CST offers a counter-cultural vision rooted in the *imago Dei,* expressed through three themes: the Dignity of Work (addressing objectification through just wages and rest), Solidarity (healing exclusion through community), and Subsidiarity (restoring autonomy through participation). A case study of a Philippine company, Piandré Salon, demonstrates how these values can be embodied in business. When CST principles unite with Filipino virtues and authentic leadership, stigmatized work is transformed into dignified work.

1 This paper used GenAI for the following components: sentence improvement, to search for repetition and check bibliography. The following GenAI technologies were used: ChatGPT, NotebookLM and Claude.ai.

Keywords: dehumanization, dignity, solidarity, subsidiarity, work

Introduction

In December 2024, the Philippine unemployment rate was posted at 3.2% representing 1.66M unemployed individuals, an achievement considering it was 6.5% ten years prior. Paradoxically, in the same period, 57% of Filipinos perceived themselves as poor, a record high since 2003.[2] According to Ibon Foundation,[3] the wage gap between the minimum wage and a family living wage in the National Capital Region in 2025 is 64% (minimum wage of ₱695 versus family living wage of ₱1,228), with the highest gap in the BARMM region at 82.3%. These figures underscore that high employment rates mask the widespread inadequacy of jobs that provide insufficient income for human flourishing.

Beyond these employment figures lies a systemic problem. According to a World Bank study, most jobs in the Philippines are considered "bad jobs" - either low-paid, under-employed (part-time work) or informal.[4] These informal, low-paid positions often fall into a broader category that sociologist Everett Hughes termed 'dirty work'—occupations that are "viscerally

2 Brian James J. Lu , "Poverty, Employment in PH – Unpacking the Contradiction," *Philippines News Agency*, https://www.pna.gov.ph/opinion/pieces/1002-poverty-employment-in-ph-unpacking-the-contradiction (accessed October 8, 2025).

3 Ibon Foundation, "Minimum Wage and Family Living Wage per Region, as of July 2025," 2025, https://www.ibon.org/flw-regl-2507/.

4 Jan. J. Rutkowski, "Employment and Poverty in the Philippines," 2015, *The World Bank*, https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/33135e40-ba91-5c7b-bcc3-dac445253e8e/content, 1.

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repulsive" or carry social stigma despite being necessary for society to function.[5]

Because our identity is so linked with our work, the stigma carries from the work to the worker, producing dehumanization through three mechanisms: objectification (workers treated as tools), systematic exclusion (rendered invisible even when seen), and loss of autonomy (denied control over their work).

This problem takes on particular significance in the Philippines, where almost 80% of the population identifies as Catholic,[6] creating an urgent challenge for Catholic business leaders who employ workers. While Catholic Social Teaching affirms that work is part of God's design and the activity for human flourishing, what happens when work dehumanizes rather than dignifies?

This article examines that question through studies of dirty work, Catholic Social Teaching and the lived practices of Piandré Salon, a Philippine company founded in 1987.

Dirty Work: Conceptual Foundations

The concept of "dirty work" was first articulated by Everett Hughes in his reflections upon visiting post-war Germany in 1948.[7] Hughes' central insight was that every society organizes itself into in-groups and out-groups, allowing repulsive or morally troubling tasks to be assigned to out-groups to preserve

5 Everett C. Hughes, *Men and Their Work* (Glencoe, Ill. Free Press, 1958), 49.

6 Abigail Marie P. Yraola, "Catholics Make up Nearly 79% of Philippine Population," February 22, 2023, *BusinessWorld Online*, https://www.bworldonline.com/the-nation/2023/02/22/506351/catholics-make-up-nearly-79-of-philippine-population/ (accessed October 22, 2025).

7 Everett C. Hughes, "Good People and Dirty Work," *Social Problems* 10, no. 1 (1962): 7–8, JSTOR, https://doi.org/10.2307/799402.

the social order of those in the in-groups.[8] (For purposes of this article however, we will not include occupations that are morally questionable, as in the Catholic definition of work, it is not considered "work".)[9] The delegation of undesirable tasks to out-groups persists across time and cultures. Contemporary examples reveal how Hughes' framework continues to explain occupational stigma in modern society. Prison guards, for instance, perform tasks considered cruel or degrading while the public turns a blind eye – they carry out society's need for control and punishment while remaining invisible to those who benefit from their work.[10] Similarly, service workers essential to community functioning – sanitation workers in sewage systems, garbage collectors, parcel delivery riders – perform invisible work that society barely notices unless the service breaks down or ceases to operate.[11] In each case, the "in-group" (the public) delegates necessary but stigmatized tasks to an "out-group" (the workers) maintaining social distance while depending on their labor.

According to Hughes all occupations contain elements of dirty work, though prestige can mitigate stigma. A doctor, for instance, may encounter blood, excrement, or death, but the dirty aspects of their work are offset by the prestige that comes from saving lives. By contrast, a janitor who works in the same hospital confronts similar physical dirt as the doctor but without the compensating prestige, and so their work

8 Hughes, "Good People and Dirty Work," 8.

9 Ferdinand Tablan, "Catholic Social Teachings: Toward a Meaningful Work," *Journal of Business Ethics* 128, no. 2 (2014): 301, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-014-2104-0.

10 Hughes, "Good People and Dirty Work," 7–8.

11 Verónica Caridad Rabelo and Ramaswami Mahalingam, "'They Really Don't Want to See Us:' How Cleaners Experience Invisible 'Dirty' Work," *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 113 (October 2018): 108, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2018.10.010.

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remains stigmatized.[12] Thus, dirtiness is not inherent in the tasks themselves but in how society puts value on the worker performing them.

Dirty Work as a Social Construct

Researchers Blake Ashforth and Glenn Kreiner assert that dirtiness is not inherent in tasks but is instead socially constructed – dependent on a particular group's context. What might be considered dirty in one place or time may be neutral or even positive in another. This context – dependency operates across three dimensions: historical (when), cultural (where), and demographic (who).[13] The meaning of "dirty" shifts as societies change, as cultural values differ across locations, and as different demographic groups interact with the work and workers.

The Philippine context provides a compelling illustration of this process, revealing how history, culture, and economic patterns converge to create and maintain the category of the "dirty worker."[14] While many factors contribute to this construction, three factors stand out for their pervasive influence: the legacy of colonialism, the cultural orientation toward high power-distance, and the racialization of Filipino workers in global labor markets.

A Colonial History

In 19th century America, dirt became a powerful cultural signifier. Cleanliness shifted from being primarily about preventing disease to being a way of affirming one's identity

12 Hughes, *Men and Their Work*, 52.

13 Blake E. Ashforth and Glen E. Kreiner, "Contextualizing Dirty Work: The Neglected Role of Cultural, Historical, and Demographic Context," *Journal of Management & Organization* 20, no. 4 (2014): 424, https://doi.org/10.1017/jmo.2014.38.

14 Ashforth and Kreiner, "Contextualizing Dirty Work," 427–33.

as an American—those handling waste, excrement, or bodily fluids—became visible symbols of low status.[15]

When the Americans colonized the Philippines, they brought this framework with them, applying it to justify colonial control. Colonial authorities frequently characterized Filipinos as filthy and incapable of proper hygiene.[16] Over time, some Filipino elites such as Dr. Vicente de Jesus challenged racial explanations for disease and uncleanliness, arguing instead that poverty – not inherent Filipino characteristics – explained public health disparities. He noted that urban Filipinos in Manila had successfully adapted to American sanitation laws, while their rural, poorer counterparts lacked the resources to do so.[17] By shifting the language from race to class, educated Filipinos could distance themselves from the stigma of the "dirty worker" while simultaneously reinforcing class hierarchies.

High Power-Distance Society

In *Contextualizing Dirty Work,* Ashforth and Kreiner contend that cultures with high power-distance – where hierarchical differences are accepted and reinforced – view dirty work more negatively than cultures with a low power-distance.[18] In high power-distance cultures, hierarchies are seen as natural and just, authority goes unquestioned, social mobility is limited, there is nepotistic advancement and large gaps between rich

15 Ashforth and Kreiner, "Contextualizing Dirty Work," 425.

16 Warwick Anderson, *Colonial Pathologies: American Tropical Medicine, Race, and Hygiene in the Philippines* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2007), 71.

17 Anderson, *Colonial Pathologies*, 191.

18 Ashforth and Kreiner, "Contextualizing Dirty Work," 430.

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and poor. Not surprisingly, the Philippines scored high, 94 out of 120 on the power-distance index, ranking #8 globally.[19]

Race and Ethnicity of Filipinos

One study of Philippine workers in Hong Kong showed that Filipinos make up 55% of foreign workers in the country with most of them working as domestics. [20] They do the dirty work of cleaning, cooking, and caring for the children of their employers. They are preferred as a race as they are seen as hardworking, docile and do not complain against abuse for fear of being sent home. At the same time, they are seen as "cheap and disposable goods," unskilled and poor from a less developed country.[21]

These three factors - colonial history, high power-distance orientation, and the racialization of Filipino workers in global labor markets – reveal how dirty work is actively constructed through historical, cultural, and economic forces. The Philippine context demonstrates that occupational stigma is neither natural nor inevitable, but rather the product of specific social arrangements that can, in principle, be transformed.

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19 World Population Review, "High Power Distance Countries 2025," http://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/high-power-distance-countries.

20 Bohan Wei, "Inequality and Transnational Dignity of Foreign Domestic Workers: The Case of Philippine Foreign Domestic Workers in Hong Kong," *Advances in Economics, Management and Political Sciences* 186, no. 1 (2025): 184, https://doi.org/10.54254/2754-1169/2025.BL23692.

21 Mary Ann B. Bolante, "Master and Servant: Contradictory Roles of Migrant Filipina Domestic Workers," *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review* 14, no. 2 (2014): 163, https://doi.org/10.59588/2350-8329.1038.

Organizational Dehumanization: Real Effects of Dirty Work Perception

Roberta Rosa Valtorta and colleagues argue that occupational stigma isn't just an issue of perception but often progresses into a deeper psychological harm: dehumanization. Dehumanization occurs when someone who is human is treated as non-human - the denial of humanity and subjectivity. In the workplace, Organizational Dehumanization is defined as "the experience of an employee who feels objectified by his or her organization, denied personal subjectivity, and made to feel like a tool or instrument for the organization's ends."[22]

Objectification of the Worker

When workers are reduced to mere instruments for organizational profit rather than recognized as persons with intrinsic worth, they experience objectification – the most generic form of organizational dehumanization.[23] In the book, *Nickel and Dimed*,[24] activist Barbara Ehrenreich conducts a social experiment to understand the plight of the dirty worker by taking on various minimum-wage jobs across different states in America. She chronicles her experiences with physically exhausting work in housekeeping, waitressing, and hospice

22 Florence Stinglhamber and Gäetane Caesens, "Organizational Dehumanization," *ResearchGate*, https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Florence-Stinglhamber-2/publication/375801182_Organizational_dehumanization/links/655dd493b1398a779da80fa3/Organizational-dehumanization.pdf, 3, citing Chris M. Bell and Careen Khoury, "Organizational De/humanization, Deindividuation, Anomie, and In/Justice," in *Emerging Perspectives on Organizational Justice and Ethics*, edited by Stephen W. Gilliland, Dirk D. Steiner and Daniel P. Skarlicki (Leeds: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2011), 168.

23 Stinglhamber and Caesens, "Organizational Dehumanization," 3.

24 Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America*, 1st Edition (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2001), Kindle Ebook.

care — all kinds of dirty work - jobs that many people usually avoid.

Ehrenreich laments the situation of the working poor, calling them the "major philanthropists of our society"[25] because they accept low wages to keep inflation and prices low. Ehrenreich validates that the stigma she felt as a dirty worker was not just a perception but real experiences of indignity, feelings of unworthiness, and low self-esteem.

She talks about the systemic dehumanization that is prevalent in the type of work that she did such as taking random drug tests, the repetition of instructions for simple tasks, and the uncomfortably close supervision at work as elements designed so that "*if you're made to feel unworthy enough, you may come to think that what you're paid is what you're actually worth.*"[26]

When workers perceive or sense that profits are prioritized over people these may result in deviant or retaliatory behaviors towards their organization. These behaviors can range from an active retaliation like stealing, littering, sabotaging, or passive retaliation such as withholding productivity and absenteeism.[27] If an employee's level of perception of the abuse was great, then the behavior might also be at that same level of aggression. Retaliatory behaviors however are mitigated by an employee's strong sense of compliance and keeping smooth

25 Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed*, Kindle Loc. 2847, p. 221.

26 Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed*, Kindle Loc. 2707, p. 211.

27 Florence Stinglhamber, Nathan Nguyen, Marc Ohana, Constantin Lagios, Stéphanie Demoulin, and Pierre Mourage, "For Whom and Why Organizational Dehumanization Is Linked to Deviant Behaviours," *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* 96, no. 1 (2022): 22, https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.12409.

interpersonal relations. If these are high, then the tendency is to forgive and less likely to develop into deviant behavior.[28]

Locally, the Filipino virtue of *pakikisama* prioritizes harmony in interpersonal relationships because they value unity. When abused, however, *pakikisama* reinforces the silence and tolerance of employees.[29]

Organizational dehumanization hits at the core of another Filipino virtue, *kapwa*. *Kapwa* is the word that "implies that others should be treated as equals and with dignity."[30] To be considered without a sense of *kapwa* is an insult to Filipinos who realize their humanity through relationship with the other.[31]

Exclusion from Society

Belonging is a fundamental human need. In the context of dirty work, however, interpersonal relationships are fractured most clearly through exclusion. If we consider that humans are inherently social, then dehumanization functions as "a range of practices that function to remove certain people from that kind."[32] To be labeled as a dirty worker is, in effect, to be excluded from respect, from reciprocity, and often from recognition as fully human.

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28 Stinglhamber, et al., "For Whom and Why Organizational Dehumanization Is Linked to Deviant Behaviours," 8.

29 Jef Menguin, "*Pakikisama*: The Filipino Value of Social Harmony," June 16, 2023, The Filipino Beat, https://jefmenguin.com/pakikisama.

30 Ferdinand Tablan, "Filipino Virtue Ethics and Meaningful Work," *Humanities Bulletin* 4, no. 1 (2021): 23-24.

31 Tablan, "Filipino Virtue Ethics and Meaningful Work," 23-24.

32 Suzy Killmister, "A Metaphysics of Dehumanization," *Philosophers Imprint* 23: 22 (2024): 14, https://doi.org/10.3998/phimp.2610.

The stigma of dirty work is co-constructed by multiple agents. External to the organization, clients who interact directly with dirty workers are particularly powerful in reinforcing stigma, precisely because their reactions validate society's broader judgment about the worker's worth.[33]

Clients reinforce stigma through both explicit rudeness and implicit denial of the worker's presence. Direct abuse is perpetuated by the uncritical belief that the "client is always right," which dehumanizes workers by expecting them to absorb unrealistic demands and disrespect.[34] When management consistently upholds the customer's side regardless of circumstance, this organizational stance compounds the lopsided treatment.

More damaging than rudeness, however, is invisibility. Dirty workers frequently report feeling invisible – and crucially, this invisibility occurs even when they are physically seen and heard.[35] The act of rendering someone invisible requires first noticing them, then deliberately ignoring them. Female janitors report male clients unzipping to urinate in their presence, performing normally private acts as if the worker were not there.[36] Cleaners describe greeting people with "good morning" and receiving no acknowledgment, despite eye

33 Anna Milena Galazka and James M. Wallace, "Challenging the 'Dirty Worker'— 'Clean Client' Dichotomy: Conceptualizing Worker-Client Relations in Dirty Work," *International Journal of Management Reviews* 25, no. 4 (2023): 6, https://doi.org/10.1111/ijmr.12330.

34 Galazka and Wallace, "Challenging the 'Dirty Worker'— 'Clean Client' Dichotomy," 8.

35 Rabelo and Mahalingam, "'They Really Don't Want to See Us,'" 107.

36 Rabelo and Mahalingam, "'They Really Don't Want to See Us,'" 108–9.

contact. Taxi drivers become privy to intimate conversations in their vehicles as if they were not there.[37]

This invisibility is what Maren Scull calls a "loss of mattering."[38] Mattering – the sense that others notice us, rely on us, and value us – plays a vital role in human self-concept. When workers feel they do not matter, they experience depression and isolation, often distancing themselves further from the very clients whose recognition they need. For dirty workers, client interactions thus become a repeated reinforcement of exclusion from the basic reciprocity that marks human community.

Within organizations themselves, abusive supervisors are particularly effective at fostering dehumanization. Observable behaviors such as directed anger, yelling, and rudeness, neglect and thoughtlessness are part of workplace mistreatment.[39]

Exclusion, whether from clients or from within the organization, strikes at the heart of the need for human beings to belong. When dirty workers are systematically denied inclusion, recognition, reciprocity, and respect, they are pushed to the margins not only of organizations but out of society itself.

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37 Blake E. Ashforth and Glen E. Kreiner, "'How Can You Do It?' Dirty Work and the Challenge of Constructing a Positive Identity," *Academy of Management Review* 24, no. 3 (1999): 417, https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1999.2202129.

38 Maren T. Scull, "The Self-Concept as a Side Bet: How Stripping Enhances the Self-Views of Men Who Dance for Women," *Deviant Behavior* 36, no. 11 (2015): 897–98, https://doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2014.977197.

39 Gaëtane Caesens, Nathan Nguyen, and Florence Stinglhamber, "Abusive Supervision and Organizational Dehumanization," *Journal of Business and Psychology* 34, no. 5 (2018): 712, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-018-9592-3.

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Loss of Autonomy

Studies have shown that organizational dehumanization primarily undermines employees' sense of autonomy and competence by stripping them of their ability to make meaningful decisions about their work. When workers are denied control over their tasks, they begin to feel mechanical and interchangeable, as though their contributions have no value beyond their instrument-like function.[40]

In the workplace, this denial of autonomy manifests through both job design and organizational culture. Repetitive work reduces employees to extensions of machines, performing the same motions without thought or creativity. Work given piecemeal, where employees see only fragments of a process without understanding the whole – prevents workers from finding meaning or taking pride in completed tasks.[41] Excessive bureaucracy compounds this problem: when employees face unnecessary rules and approval chains, they lose the ability to exercise judgment. This is particularly evident in government work, where red tape is often accepted as inevitable rather than questioned as dehumanizing.[42]

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40 Constantin Lagios, Gaëtane Caesens, Nathan Nguyen, and Florence Stinglhamber, "Explaining the Negative Consequences of Organizational Dehumanization," *Journal of Personnel Psychology* 21, no. 2 (2021): 2, https://doi.org/10.1027/1866-5888/a000286.

41 Herbert G. Kelman, "Violence Without Moral Restraint: Reflections on the Dehumanization of Victims and Victimizers," *Journal of Social Issues* 29, no. 4 (1973): 46, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1973.tb00102.x.

42 Constantin Lagios, Gaëtane Caesens, Nathan Nguyen, and Florence Stinglhamber, "Dysfunctional Rules in Organizations: The Mediating Role of Organizational Dehumanization in the Relationship between Red Tape and Employees' Outcomes," *European Management Journal* 41, no. 5 (2023): 802–13, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2022.06.002.

The consequences of lost autonomy extend beyond the workplace. Research shows that when employees lack decision-making latitude at work, they experience increased depression that affects their family relationships. Autonomy serves a protective function: workers who have some control over their tasks are better able to manage both workplace stress and family conflict.[43] Conversely, employees who constantly experience this loss of control report exhaustion manifesting as anxiety, stress, headaches, and fatigue. Their motivation diminishes, their loyalty disappears, and their physical and psychological health suffers – often leading them to leaving the organization entirely.[44]

For dirty workers, the denial of autonomy compounds existing stigma. Not only are they performing work society devalues, but they are given no control over their work – how to perform it or exercise judgment, thwarting a basic psychological need.

Filipino Cultural Values and Worker Vulnerability

The mechanisms of organizational dehumanization described above—objectification, exclusion, and loss of autonomy—are universal patterns that affect dirty workers across cultures. In the Philippine context, however, these mechanisms are amplified by two specific cultural values. *Hiya* and *pakikisama* illustrate this dual nature: as authentic virtues they promote temperance and solidarity, but when distorted within

43 Yuan Zhang, Alicia G. Dugan, Mazen El Ghaziri, Sundus Siddique, and Laura Punnett, "Work–Family Conflict and Depression Among Healthcare Workers: The Role of Sleep and Decision Latitude," *Workplace Health & Safety* 71, no. 4 (2023): 10, https://doi.org/10.1177/21650799221139998.

44 Gaëtane Caesens and Florence Stinglhamber, "The Relationship Between Organizational Dehumanization and Outcomes," *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* 61, no. 9 (2019): 702, https://doi.org/10.1097/jom.0000000000001638.

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hierarchical work structures, they enforce silent submission and acceptance.

Hiya[45] is commonly translated as "shame," but operates more complexly as a sense of social propriety and awareness of how one's actions affect community standing. In its positive expression, *hiya* promotes temperance, respect, and consideration for others. However, in its passive form *hiya* becomes a silencing mechanism within exploitative work contexts. Workers who experience abuse or injustice often do not speak up because doing so would cause "*kahihiyan*" (shame) to themselves and their families. The fear of being called "*walang hiya*" (shameless) is one of the worst moral condemnations in the culture.

Pakikisama[46]—the cultural imperative to maintain smooth interpersonal relationships and group harmony—similarly has dual expressions. In authentic community contexts, *pakikisama* builds solidarity. But in a high power-distance context, workers are expected to show *pakikisama* by not complaining about low wages, excessive hours, or poor treatment. To demand better conditions is to be "*hindi marunong makisama*" (someone who does not know how to get along), marking oneself as a trouble-maker who threatens group cohesion.

The result is that Filipino dirty workers face a double bind: they experience the same universal mechanisms of dehumanization that affect dirty workers globally, but they possess cultural values that – when distorted through excess or misapplied within hierarchical workplace contexts – condition them to accept dehumanizing conditions as everyday realities.

Sociologically, for business leaders, the dehumanization of work has far reaching detrimental effects on the worker,

45 Tablan, "Filipino Virtue Ethics and Meaningful Work," 31.

46 Tablan, "Filipino Virtue Ethics and Meaningful Work," 24–25.

workplace culture, the organization itself and the rest of society. For Catholic Business Leaders, we look towards Catholic Social Teaching to give us the impetus to provide for humanizing work in our own spheres.

Catholic Social Teaching's Response

The Christian vision of work acknowledges both its consolation and desolation. It is universal that everyone who works experiences toil and hardship - whether the work is physically backbreaking or exhausting at the intellectual workbench, suffering accompanies work as a consequence of sin. Pope John Paul II reminds us that this is transformative: through work, the human being becomes "more a human being."[47] The movement of work is not only to produce good work externally but there is also an internal transformation happening in the worker- a moral perfection of the worker as image of God.[48]

Jesus himself lived as a carpenter—a *tekton*—sanctifying humble labor through his own hands. When people carry their cross in daily work, they reveal themselves as true disciples of Christ. Work thus serves as a path to sanctification and a means of infusing earthly realities with the spirit of Christ. For the Catholic business leader, this theological vision reframes the challenge: employees are not merely workers but persons in the image of Christ and called to participate in God's creative work through their labor.[49]

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47 John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, 14 September 1981, Encyclicals, http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens.html (accessed October 10, 2025), 9.

48 John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, 6.

49 Opus Dei, "What Does It Mean to Sanctify Work?" October 8, 2021, https://opusdei.org/en-ph/article/what-does-it-mean-to-sanctify-work/.

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Dignity of Work

The principle of the Dignity of Work directly confronts the dehumanization of objectification by establishing a theological truth: work has dignity not because of the work itself but because of who performs it.

Gaudium et Spes emphasizes that human work is meaningful because it is a human being doing the work.[50] Since the human being is the subject of the work, human beings cannot be objectified or considered as means towards an end. Pope Benedict XVI, in his encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, writes that "development must include not just material growth but also spiritual growth, since the human person is a 'unity of body and soul,' born of God's creative love and destined for eternal life."[51]

Leaders should recognize that employees might not have the opportunity to choose meaningful work due to necessity or a lack of choice. Therefore, they can choose to provide meaningful work by crafting jobs and structures that promote human flourishing, or at the very least, provide the basic environment where the human being can flourish at work or outside of it.[52]

Material Dignity

The material dimension of dignity addresses the physical conditions of work—wages, rest, and protection from

50 Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, December 7, 1965, Vatican Archive, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html, 35.

51 Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, June 29, 2009, Encyclicals, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate.html, 76, citing Vatican II, Gaudium et Spes, 14.

52 Christopher Michaelson, "Whose Responsibility Is Meaningful Work?" *Journal of Management Development* 30, no. 6 (2011): 552, https://doi.org/10.1108/02621711111135152.

harm—that enable workers to sustain themselves and their families with security and stability.

The concept of a Family Living Wage (FLW) was first introduced in *Rerum Novarum* and further developed in *Quadragesimo Anno.* Pope Pius XI emphasizes that giving a wage that allows a family to live a decent life is not charity but justice.[53] *Gaudium et Spes* talks about a family living wage with enough to spend not just on necessities such as food and housing but also to have opportunities for activities on a social, cultural, and spiritual level.[54] *Laborem Exercens* reiterates that just wages should provide security for the family on a single income.[55]

Filipino researcher Vivencio Ballano compared the family living wage (FLW) as prescribed by the Catholic Church and the minimum wage laws of the Philippines.[56] In 2025, the National Capital Region (NCR) minimum wage is P695 while the FLW calculated by Ibon Foundation is P1,228.[57] The legal minimum wage is based on the barest minimum for economic survival while the Ibon Foundation's FLW is based on the cost of living that includes expenses for social, cultural, and spiritual development, as well as savings for emergencies and retirement. Like the Church's recommendation, Ibon Foundation adheres to the principle that one income should be sufficient to support a

53 Pope Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno*, May 15, 1931, Encyclicals, https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19310515_quadragesimo-anno.html, 71.

54 Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, 67.

55 John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, 19.

56 Vivencio O. Ballano, "Law, Morality, and Catholic Social Teaching on Family Living Wage: Analyzing the Adequacy and Morality of the Minimum Wage in the Philippines," *Cogent Social Sciences* 8, no. 1 (2022): 5–10, https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2021.2023253.

57 Ibon Foundation, "Minimum Wage and Family Living Wage per Region, as of July 2025," August 9, 2025, https://www.ibon.org/flw-regl-2507/.

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family of five. Ballano concludes that the legal minimum wage remains immoral according to CST's criteria.

For the leader employing dirty workers—many of whom earn minimum wage or less—this teaching presents a clear moral obligation. Just wages are not merely a matter of legal compliance but of recognizing that each worker is a person whose dignity demands more than bare subsistence.

Aside from just wages, one of the more important aspects of providing dignified work is the right to rest. Article 82 of the Labor Code of the Philippines specifies a maximum of 48 hours of work per week, with 24 hours of rest after every 6 days of work. However, this excludes government and managerial employees, field personnel, domestic helpers, and persons who provide personal service to others.[58] Security guards are given notable exceptions allowing 12-hour shifts with continuous work and no regular rest days, though with special pay.[59]

These conditions violate CST. In *Rerum Novarum*, Pope Leo XIII states: "A workman ought to have leisure and rest proportionate to the wear and tear of his strength... for waste of strength must be repaired by cessation from hard work."[60] Rest is not merely absence from work but space for worship

58 Kittelson Carpo, "Working Hours," October 2022, https://kittelsoncarpo.com/labor-employment/working-hours/.

59 Harold Respicio, "Inquiry Regarding Security Guards' Working Hours in the Philippines," November 2024, https://www.respicio.ph/dear-attorney/inquiry-regarding-security-guards-working-hours-in-the-philippines.

60 Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, May 15, 1891, Encyclicals, https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum.html, 42.

and contemplation of God's work in our daily lives. Only when we rest are we able to receive.[61]

Ensuring genuine rest—not merely legal compliance—becomes an act of restoring dignity to those whom society has objectified as mere instruments of production. Yet just wages and adequate rest address only the physical dimension of human dignity. Workers are embodied spirits searching for transcendence.

Spiritual Dignity

Pope Paul VI in *Populorum Progressio* writes that working only for material gain may lead to over-consumption and greed in the pursuit of power, avarice and a "soul-stifling materialism."[62]

The concept of Workplace Spirituality emerged in academic literature in the 1990s as people sought meaning beyond materialism and community outside traditional religious institutions.[63] It came about as employees who spent much of their waking hours at work, were seeking more meaning and purpose in their work, and were also looking to integrate their personal and spiritual values within their work. Workplace spirituality recognizes that employees are both body and soul – and that as workers, nurturing the inner life through spiritual practices can lead to a more productive outer life.[64]

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61 Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, *Vocation of the Business Leader: A Reflection* – 5th Edition, n.d., https://www.humandevelopment.va/en/risorse/documenti/vocation-of-the-business-leader-a-reflection-5th-edition.html, 70.

62 Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, March 26, 1967, Encyclicals, https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_26031967_populorum.html, 18.

63 Christopher G. Beehner, *Workplace and Organizational Spirituality,* in *Palgrave Studies in Workplace Spirituality and Fulfillment* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2024), 80–81, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-47643-3_3.

64 Beehner, Workplace and Organizational Spirituality, 85.

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Dignity of Work in Practice

For Filipinos, the concept of dignity is deeply rooted in two foundational virtues, *Loob* and *Kapwa. Loob* is the "person's interior truth since this is the ultimate, organizing center of human reality. It is the very center of his humanity where his ideas, beliefs and behavior lie and the true worth of a person is situated."[65] *Loob* is the whole self – intellect, emotion, spirit. Understanding that each worker has *loob* means recognizing their inherent value as whole persons – body and soul – independent of external circumstances or productivity.

Kapwa expresses the relational dimension of dignity. Literally meaning "both" and "fellow," *kapwa* implies that "others should be treated as equals and with dignity. It is more than just a respect for the other but it is a unity of self with the other."[66] Together, *loob* and *kapwa* provide a Filipino understanding of what CST proclaims: every person possesses intrinsic dignity that must be honored in both material and spiritual dimensions.

One core value from Ignatian Spirituality which is *cura personalis*—care for the whole person—addresses a dimension of material dignity often overlooked in transactional employment relationships: the recognition that workers' physical well-being cannot be separated from their life circumstances. When employees face medical crises, most organizations treat such disruptions as liabilities. Piandré's practice demonstrates an alternative: recognizing that caring for employees' bodies and material needs, embodies respect for their inherent dignity as persons with *Loob.*

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65 Tablan, "Filipino Virtue Ethics and Meaningful Work," 23, citing Sheldon Ives G. Agaton, "Vantage Points of *Utang na Loob,*" *Social Ethics Society of Applied Philosophy* 3/1 (October 2017): 60.

66 Tablan, "Filipino Virtue Ethics and Meaningful Work," 23-24.

One of these stories from Piandré is that of Cecil Avila. In 2025, Cecil was among the recipients of a silver loyalty award for 25 years of service. She tearfully recounted her health challenges that began 15 years ago. She went through a brain tumor and then, a few years later, ovarian cancer, going through chemotherapy while also caring for three young boys on her own. Throughout her medical challenges, the company was there for her, footing the bill as her complicated procedures exceeded the limits of her medical insurance. Beyond financial help, Cecil shared the times when Francisco was in the waiting area of the operating room or on the other side of a phone call.[67]

The care for each employee resonates with the Filipino virtue of *bayanihan* – the spirit of communal cooperation most powerfully expressed through physical presence during crisis. With *bayanihan* money and other substitutions cannot replace the act of showing up.

Spiritual Dignity

Each year, the company invites all employees to a three-day retreat that is held during the months of June to August. The retreats are voluntary, and the company sponsors all expenses, food, transportation, and lodging. Everyone is invited to attend the same retreat, from the laundry women, drivers, maintenance crew, to supervisors and management. At the retreats, conducted entirely in the local dialect, there is zero talk about work, the salon, productivity, money or business.[68]

One long-time employee said,

67 Piandré (director), "Cecil at 25," *Piandré Salon* (YouTube), 2025, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_48snKMfikE, 19:28.

68 Piandré, "The Business of Spirituality - The Piandré Story - YouTube." *Piandré Salon* (YouTube), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UUSsleLtcWo&t=2s (accessed September 29, 2025).

> One thing that changed me and had a big impact on me is when I experienced the retreats. (I asked myself), 'what am I', 'who am I?,' 'what is my purpose?' (The answer was) 'I am important.' It was there that I realized that I am not just an ordinary person. That I am a big blessing to everyone. So it became clear what my purpose in life was. These were the things that I cannot forget. It was during that time when I accepted myself, I learned how to love; I love who I am.[69]

These spiritual practices counter the "soul-stifling materialism" of dehumanizing work—the reduction of work to mere economic transaction. By creating space for prayer, sacrament, and retreat within the rhythm of work life, Piandré acknowledges workers as embodied spirits whose dignity demands both material provision and spiritual nourishment. The employee testimonies reveal the spiritual dignity operationalized—the recognition that persons with *loob* require not only just wages and rest, but also spiritual nourishment through prayer, sacrament and communal worship.

Solidarity

Dirty workers are rendered invisible by clients even while being seen, ostracized by supervisors, denied the recognition and reciprocity essential to human community. This "loss of

69 Piandré (director), "Francis Quinones Celebrates 25 Years!" *Piandré Salon* (YouTube), 2024, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h-CmIpoAf0a0, 7:15: *"Isang bagay na nakapagpabago sa akin at nagkaroon ng malaking impact sa akin noong ma-experience kay mga retreats. Ano ba talaga ako? Sino ba ako? Ano ba ang purpose ko? Ako pala ay mahalaga. Doon ko natagpuan ang sarili ko na ako pala ay hindi ordinaryong tao lang. Isa pala akong malaking biyaya sa lahat. So naging malinaw at naging maliwanag kung anong purpose ko sa buhay. Yun ang mga bagay na hindi ko makakalimutan. Kaya nga noong time na natanggap ko ang sarili ko, natuto ako magmahal; minahal ko ang sarili ko."*

mattering"[70] severs workers from basic human belonging. The principle of Solidarity responds to this exclusion by calling persons in authority to build genuine community where workers are recognized, valued, and treated as equals towards communion in the common good.

John Paul II reminds us that through our common fatherhood of God and brotherhood in Christ, and through the presence of the Holy Spirit, a new humanity should emerge that is in solidarity with one another. Solidarity then is not a feeling but a commitment to the common good – "the good of all and of each individual, because we are really responsible for all."[71]

Solidarity makes us consider the "other" as our "neighbor," "our helper," it is a humanity where the needy Lazarus can sit at the same banquet as the rich man,[72] "to be made a sharer, on par with ourselves, in the banquet of life to which all are equally invited by God."[73] The Church holds a special primacy for the poor, because God himself became poor. Pope Francis calls this travesty the economy of exclusion, where the poor and marginalized are not only isolated and alienated but no longer part of society and completely excluded.[74]

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70 Scull, "The Self-Concept as a Side Bet," 897, citing Leonard I. Pearlin and Allen J. LeBlanc, "Bereavement and the Loss of Mattering," in *Extending Self-Esteem Theory and Research*, edited by Timothy J. Owens, Sheldon Stryker, and Norman Goodman (Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 2001), 288-299.

71 John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 30 December 1987, Encyclicals, http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html (accessed October 11, 2025), 38.

72 Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, 47.

73 John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 39.

74 Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, November 24, 2013, Encyclicals, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html, 53.

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Pope Benedict calls it the *principle of gratuitousness* to act in a fraternal communion to follow the lead of God-who-is-Love. He continues that we must go beyond the transactional nature of the world and use the logic of Gift. He cautions that while the minimum model to aspire for is justice, for us to have an authentically human development, there has to exist an element of love. While this logic sounds lofty for the business person, Pope Benedict calls on a new humanism of people that are open to *reciprocal gift.*[75]

For Filipinos, solidarity finds natural expression in three interrelated virtues. *Pakikisama* means "a willingness to subordinate one's own interest in favor of others, in the spirit of harmony, friendship, cooperation and deference to majority decision so that group goals can be easily achieved."[76] It builds trust and prioritizes collective good over individual advantage. *Malasakit* is "the virtue of selfless concern for others' well-being through caring, emotional involvement, compassion, and commitment without demanding anything in return."[77] Unlike *pakikisama*, *malasakit* does not involve reciprocity and can be directed to anyone, even strangers and enemies—it is treating others the way you would like to be treated. Finally, Family Orientation recognizes that "nothing is more important to Filipinos than the family—no other institution in the Philippines commands as much commitment, sacrifice and affection."[78] To treat someone as family is the highest expression of *kapwa*—recognizing them as "*hindi iba*" (not a stranger) but one of us.

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75 Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, June 29, 2009, Encyclicals, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate.html, 39.

76 Tablan, "Filipino Virtue Ethics and Meaningful Work," 25, citing Felipe Landa Jocano, *Growing up in the Philippine Barrio* (San Francisco: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1997), 65-66.

77 Tablan, "Filipino Virtue Ethics and Meaningful Work," 27.

78 Tablan, "Filipino Virtue Ethics and Meaningful Work," 29.

In the first few days of the lockdown during the pandemic, when tensions and insecurity were high, Mrs. Francisco announced that the staff would be paid their daily wages even if the salons remained closed. In the Philippines, the common practice for the dirty worker is "no work, no pay" but Mrs. Francisco pledged to continue salaries despite the pronouncement of the government to put employees on furlough.

This arrangement continued for two more years when restrictions eased. Employees were put on three and four day a week work shifts, and yet they continued to be paid the full salary as if they worked for 48 hours a week. The mantra of the company was "*walang iwanan*," no one gets left behind.[79] One employee commented,

> I said to myself, it is good that I am here at Piandré, because I keep on thinking that if I'm at Piandré, I feel secured. I feel confident. Because I know that there are people there that support me always.[80]

This practice embodies *pakikisama* in its authentic form—management subordinating economic concerns in favor of workers' collective welfare. In a context where dirty workers are often treated as dispensable, Piandré's "*walang iwanan*" directly countered exclusion by affirming: "we will not abandon you, when you need us the most."

Through practices of *pakikisama*, *malasakit*, and Family Orientation, Piandré demonstrates how Filipino virtues naturally

79 Andrea Zulueta-Lorenzana, "A Yearlong Reflection on Life and Death," *Manila Bulletin*, April 23, 2021, https://mb.com.ph//2021/04/23/a-yearlong-reflection-on-life-and-death/.

80 Piandré (director), "Larry at 30," *Piandré Salon* (YouTube), 2025, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bVUVAKj4z7k, 03: 23: *"Sabi ko nga, mabuti na lang din dito ako kasi parang yung iniisip ko lagi na pag nasa Piandré ako, parang secured ka. Alam mo yun na kampante ka eh. Kasi alam mo may tao na nandyan lagi sumusuporta sa yo."*

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embody solidarity's call for genuine community. The following theme, Subsidiarity, however, presents a different challenge.

Subsidiarity

The principle of Subsidiarity addresses the loss of autonomy by insisting that workers must have genuine participation in decisions that affect them, exercising their capacities as rational, creative beings made in God's image.

In an organization, Subsidiarity entails training employees at lower levels to be treated as partners and co-owners. This allows persons to exercise their freedom and autonomy to flourish at work.[81]

Pope Francis explains that the principle has a double directional movement, from the top down and from the bottom up. Leaders cannot work towards the common good without the assent of those at the bottom, while those at the bottom must also participate and contribute also to society's good. "Everyone needs to have the possibility of assuming their own responsibility in the healing processes of the society of which they are a part."[82] Sometimes however, Pope Francis laments, the poor are marginalized or excluded and cannot participate because they are "economically or socially suffocated."[83]

The Vocation of the Business Leader gives suggestions for the business leader: define roles so employees can work with autonomy with significant contribution within clear boundaries;

81 Domènec Melé, "Exploring the Principle of Subsidiarity in Organisational Forms," *Journal of Business Ethics* 60 (2005): 297, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-005-0136-1.

82 Pope Francis, *Catechesis "Healing the World:" 8. Subsidiarity and Virtue of Hope*, 23 September 2020, Audiences, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2020/documents/papa-francesco_20200923_udienza-generale.html (accessed October 19, 2025).

83 Pope Francis, *Catechesis "Healing the World:" 8. Subsidiarity and Virtue of Hope.*

equip employees with tools and knowledge to carry out their work; establish a culture of trust so those entrusted with work can freely make decisions. It is sincere engagement of each one so that everyone is encouraged to grow and be accountable for their part. For the business leader, this requires restraint and sharing of control and responsibility.[84]

Of the three principles of CST discussed in this paper, Subsidiarity presents a particular challenge in the Philippine context. The Philippines ranks high on the power-distance scale. In the workplace, this manifests in a top-down approach from management where there is a "command and control" environment where leaders "lead" and employees "follow." While this approach has proven beneficial in stable years, the COVID pandemic revealed that employees experience greater psychological safety and effectiveness when they are engaged and participate in decisions that affect their work.[85]

The Filipino virtue of *bayanihan*—communal cooperation where communities unite for specific projects—might seem to embody subsidiarity. However, *bayanihan* emphasizes collective action toward shared goals with no mention of participatory structures that align more closely with solidarity rather than subsidiarity. The challenge for Piandré is to create genuine worker participation within a cultural context that traditionally values deference to authority and collective harmony over individual assertion.

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84 Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, *Vocation of the Business Leader: A Reflection* – 5th Edition, 51.

85 Alice Williams, "The Art of Breaking Down Hierarchies and Nurturing Psychological Safety in Philippine Workplaces," *Great Place To Work Philippines*, April 2, 2024, https://greatplacetowork.com.ph/blog/the-art-of-breaking-down-hierarchies-and-nurturing-psychological-safety-in-philippine-workplaces/.

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Piandré addresses this through a structural innovation: the Salon Multi-Purpose Cooperative (SMPC), a cooperative comprised of salon employees that has been an official member of the Cooperative Development Authority of the Philippines (CDA) since 1990. In the Philippines, cooperatives are the most easily accessible financial instrument for the poor. In 2024, all 20,000 cooperatives in the country made a net surplus of 27 billion pesos divided among 13 million members.[86]

The cooperative model embodies subsidiarity because it requires participatory structures in the management of the cooperative's business. As a multi-purpose cooperative, SMPC owns two franchises of Piandré Salons. At the CDA, they caution that a cooperative's business cannot be the same as that of the principal company to avoid conflict and competition. However, if management of the parent company allows the same business type, there is no violation.[87] Since Piandré management granted this permission, SMPC benefits from the strength of the principal's brand, management's expertise, and preferred pricing with suppliers.

Through this arrangement, cooperative members, now co-salon owners, have access to the financial statements of each branch, allowing them to know explicitly – every year during the general assembly – the amount each branch earns after taxes and expenses. Consequently, when they see how much each salon is making, they realize that profit margins are not what they might have perceived them to be. This transparency helps cooperative members understand issues

86 Cooperative Development Authority, "FY 2024 Cooperative Statistics," *CDA*, May 8, 2025, https://cda.gov.ph/updates/fy-2023-cooperative-statistics-2/.

87 Marge C. Enriquez, "Salon Chain Gives First Franchise to Employees' Cooperative," *INQUIRER.Net*, July 23, 2017, https://business.inquirer.net/233699/salon-chain-gives-first-franchise-employees-cooperative.

about compensation, the importance of saving on electricity and product costs, and the impact of emergency repairs and broken equipment on the bottom line.[88]

The cooperative's savings and loan component further operationalizes subsidiarity. The board of directors has sole discretion over the cooperative's business decisions. One of its primary duties, through its credit committee, is reviewing and approving loans. Through practice and deliberation, they determine whether requested loans will help or burden the member employee even more. They also make decisions about where to invest their income, which opportunities to pursue, and which trainings to attend. They can decide to release funds for emergencies, adjust interest rates to facilitate calamity loans, and initiate restructuring of the loans to alleviate pressure on their members.[89]

The cooperative model demonstrates that subsidiarity can be operationalized even within high power-distance cultures when structures create genuine participation. While Filipino culture tends toward deference and collective harmony, the cooperative's formal structures—board elections, credit committee deliberations, general assemblies with financial transparency—create spaces where workers exercise real autonomy and bear authentic responsibility.

These three principles work together as an integrated whole, each requiring the other two to function properly. All three must be present simultaneously for work to be truly humanized. Without Dignity as the foundation, both Solidarity and Subsidiarity lose their theological grounding—they become mere management techniques rather than expressions of the

88 Gerry Sena Urbino, Jr. and Lito Gagni (hosts), "NEGOSHOW," *DWIZ* 882 (YouTube), January 9, 2025, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cg9UfogNZnc (accessed October 7, 2025).

89 Urbino and Gagni (hosts), "NEGOSHOW."

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imago Dei. Without Solidarity to build authentic community, both Dignity and Subsidiarity remain individualistic—isolated workers may have worth and decision-making power, but lack the communion essential to human flourishing. Without Subsidiarity enabling genuine participation, both Dignity and Solidarity risk paternalism—workers may be valued and included, but denied the agency that makes them co-creators rather than dependents. Together, they form a coherent vision of work as it should be: persons exercising their God-given capacities in community toward the common good.

Conclusion: A Call to Action

In conclusion, dirty work, being socially constructed, is malleable and can be transformed. Catholic Social Teaching provides the framework through three integrated principles—Dignity of Work, Solidarity, and Subsidiarity—that directly address the three mechanisms of organizational dehumanization.

The **Dignity of Work,** where the primacy of the human person is established, is operationalized through both material provisions (protection from abuse, the right to rest, holistic care) and spiritual nourishment (formation in identity as *imago Dei*, daily prayer, spiritual encounters and retreats). These practices counter objectification by recognizing workers as integrated persons with *loob*—embodied spirits requiring both physical and spiritual care.

Solidarity is expressed through Filipino virtues of *pakikisama*, *malasakit*, and Family Orientation, creating genuine community where workers are recognized, valued, and supported. The "*walang iwanan*" commitment of management during the pandemic, mutual care among employees, and transformed client relationships directly counter the exclusion and invisibility that characterize dirty work.

Subsidiarity presents the greatest cultural challenge in the Philippines' high power-distance context, but the Salon Multi-Purpose Cooperative demonstrates that genuine worker participation is possible when formal structures are put in place to enable autonomy and decision-making. The cooperative model shows the theme of subsidiarity inculturated—not imposed as a foreign principle, but adapted to work within and transform Filipino cultural patterns toward genuine participation in the common good.

When CST principles are integrated with authentic Filipino virtues, organizations can create environments that transform stigmatized work into dignified work, as intended by the Creator.

For the Catholic business leader in the Philippines, this opportunity is particularly significant. With nearly eighty percent of the population identifying as Catholic, the familiarity with gospel values and openness to their application in organizational life reinforces workers and supervisors who want to live more authentic lives. Filipino virtues, when practiced authentically, naturally embody CST principles. Catholic business leaders in the Philippines are uniquely positioned to create transformative workplaces that honor both faith and culture. This article serves as a starting point for business owners who employ "dirty workers" to gain confidence in creatively practicing Catholic Social Teaching principles in the workplace. By demonstrating through concrete example that dirty work can be transformed into dignified work, it offers hope that the counter-cultural version of the gospel is within reach.

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