



DIOCESE OF DES MOINES

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Bishop Pates issues statement on labor-management relations

The following statement regarding labor-management relations was released today by Bishop Richard Pates, Bishop of Des Moines.

The statement was to be presented at a gathering sponsored by the Iowa Federation of Labor at the State Capitol on April 4, 2011 on behalf of Bishop Pates by Father David Polich, Pastor of St. Patrick Parish in Perry, Iowa.

Statement

In the midst of turmoil related to labor unions and the current economy, it is appropriate to reiterate long standing church teaching dating back to 1891 and Pope Leo XIII.

The Church in its teaching on labor has steadfastly upheld that workers deserve just wages and benefits, decent working conditions and the ability to organize and engage in collective bargaining.

Archbishop Jerome ListECKI of Milwaukee recently stated: “Hard times do not nullify the moral obligation each of us has to respect the legitimate rights of workers.” At the same time, the Archbishop stated that unions need to “make sacrifices when required” in adjusting to “new

economic realities.”

In his most recent encyclical letter, *Caritas in Veritate*, Pope Benedict XVI states, “The repeated calls . . . for the promotion of workers’ associations that can defend their rights must therefore be honored today even more than in the past.” (#25) In *Laborem Exercens*, Pope John Paul II called labor associations “an indispensable element of social life, especially in modern industrialized societies,” but also reminded unions “to secure the just rights of workers within the framework of the common good of the whole of society.” (#20)

The present moment offers an opportunity for unions and management to work strenuously for the common good in order that all in society might participate justly and equitably in the rich gifts of a beneficent creator.