



Current Issues in Prayer

January 2014

Welcome! The Pope invites people of different faiths to come together and pray:

That all may promote authentic economic development that respects the dignity of all peoples.



Getting started:

I sit in a comfortable place and try to leave the bustle of everyday life behind. As I sit I become aware of the sensation of my clothes against my skin, of the texture of the fabric. If I am wearing something uncomfortable, I adjust my clothes until I feel more comfortable.

I rest for a while, and for a few moments enjoy the feel of my clothes on me.



Short story:

On the morning of 24th April, 2013, Sharina walked into the Rana Plaza building in Dhaka (Bangladesh), where she worked in a factory making clothes for major retailers of the Western World. Sharina and her husband worked long shifts at the Rana Plaza, jointly earning about €70 a month. This wasn't enough to meet their needs, as they had to support Sharina's elderly parents who lived in the countryside. Sharina and her co-workers were forbidden by their employer to join a union. They were afraid to fight for better working conditions, afraid that this might cost them their job.



<http://www.waronwant.org/>

That morning, Sharina felt anxious as she walked into the factory. The day before, worrying cracks had appeared in the building which had been illegally extended. The hours passed slowly but, as Sharina was sewing her fiftieth T-shirt seam, she heard a loud rumble. The floor moved and, tragically, the next thing she knew, she was lying on a mattress in hospital. The Rana Plaza had collapsed, claiming more than a thousand and hundred lives, including Sharina's husband.

Two thousand five hundred wounded were rescued from the collapsed ruins.

Sharina lost her right arm, and as a result she will now find it impossible to find work. Many promises were made; but she has not received any compensation for her loss or for her injury.

**Time to reflect:**

I get in touch with my feelings as I reflect on Sharina's desperate story. Can I name them?
Am I aware of instances in which profits were put before people in my own country?
Have I ever been greedy and hurt someone to get what I wanted?

**Let us pray:**

Lord, you have created human beings in your image and gave them great dignity. Help us understand how we can work to value people more than money.

I pause for a while and then make my own prayer. If I am with others, I invite them to share their own prayer too.

**Inspiration:**

"The ends you serve that are selfish will take you no further than yourself but the ends you serve that are for all, in common, will take you into eternity."

Marcus Garvey

**Hands on:**

When shopping, read the labels on clothes and other items more carefully. Try to find out about the countries where my clothes were made and about the workers who made them.

Learn about fair trade and ask shop owners to stock fair trade items.

Further reading:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-24195441>

<http://www.globallabourrights.org/campaigns?id=0003>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-22370487>

<http://www.waronwant.org/campaigns/love-fashion-hate-sweatshops>

<http://asiafoundation.org/in-asia/2013/05/15/united-efforts-not-boycotts-will-help-bangladeshs-garment-workers/>