We invite you to consider the theme of Economic Justice and Employment in your prayer this month.

The UN Commission on Social Development, February 2008, take as its theme: “Promoting Full Employment and Decent Work for All”

The Report of the Secretary-General for the commission says: According to the most recent estimates, 1.5 billion people, or one third of the working-age population worldwide, were either unemployed or under the poverty line. About one third of the world’s working-age population is not participating at all in the labor markets. The inactivity rate is strikingly higher among women — 5 out of 10 women worldwide are not in the labor force — and youth are more than three times as likely to be unemployed than adults. See more here: http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/csd/csocd2008.htm [English]

Good Shepherd took Economic Justice as a theme in 2003.

The General chapter direction says: “we commit ourselves to... Promote strong justice initiatives giving priority to the problems of economic injustice and the exploitation of women and children.”

Good Shepherd Economic Justice Ministries speaks of its mission to “work in partnership with women and those in social and economic distress. We promote human dignity and justice by creating opportunities for economic and social transformation.” See: http://www.gsejmi.org/

GS NGO, in an official statement to the UN Commission on Social Development, 2008 says: “...women play a vitally important role in economic growth and the reduction of poverty worldwide. When women have greater access to financial resources they are more likely to make decisions that benefit their households in terms of improved nutrition, education, and health. ...we see the major contributions that women make in poverty reduction is through the emergence of the microfinance movement... that helps improve the quality of life for themselves and their households.

...gender discrimination in labor markets, lack of meaningful employment - particularly in formal markets - minimal opportunities, and few development resources for women persist worldwide.

It is essential that space be provided to empower women to participate in all aspects of public life to help quell the discrimination that women face in securing work and in the workplace itself...
It also is important to implement mechanisms to “formalize” the work of self-employed women by supporting and expanding organizing efforts through trade unions, associations, cooperatives, and self-help groups."

**Prayer Starters:**

*Below are some quotes that may spark you prayer preparation.*

*Study of Catholic Social teaching is encouraged. Evaluation of each one’s commitment to be aware of and to support GS Economic Justice Ministries may be helpful to integrate your prayer.*

**On the Condition of Workers, Pope Leo XIII 1891**

#3- we clearly see, .., that some remedy must be found quickly for the misery and wretchedness pressing so unjustly on the majority of the working class… it has come to pass that working men have been surrendered, isolated and helpless, to the hard-heartedness of employers and the greed of unchecked competition. ..the hiring of labor and the conduct of trade are concentrated in the hands of comparatively few; so that a small number of very rich men have been able to lay upon the teeming masses of the laboring poor a yoke little better than that of slavery itself.

**Quadragesimo Anno, On Reconstruction of the Social Order**

Pius XI, 1931

# 59- …the number of the non-owning working poor has increased enormously and their groans cry to God from the earth. Added to them is the huge army of rural wageworkers, pushed to the lowest level of existence and deprived of all hope... unless suitable and effective remedies are applied.

**Excerpt from a Statement of GS NGO to the UN Commission on Social Development 2- 2008**

Lack of real employment opportunities is a driving force in the migration of labor. Women represent a rising percentage of those who leave their countries in search of work. The migration of women causes division of families and those who remain behind become reliant on remittances, which are often subject to high taxation in origin and destination countries. …women migrants are particularly vulnerable to exploitation. One stark example of this is human trafficking, in which over 700,000 women and children are victims of trafficking each year for sexual exploitation and forced labor …
Excerpt from Materials of Good Shepherd Economic Justice Ministries:

The increase of globalization has brought much suffering to the poorest people of the world. Many countries with underdeveloped economies cannot offer social protection to the most vulnerable who are made unemployed or whose income is severely reduced because of the decline in the demand for unskilled labor, the decrease in prices for cash crops and the loss of land, to name but a few factors. On the other hand, globalization offers new possibilities for cooperation. Good Shepherd Economic Justice Ministries International – with Good Shepherd Sisters in 68 countries – is working to exploit these possibilities. We wish to play our part in helping globalization work for the poor of the world.