

Dear Siblings:

We are writing to you today to let you know that we, as Christians, stand with you in your request for a safer work environment. Meatpacking plants have been identified as among the top “hotspots” for the spread of COVID-19 in the United States. As of this writing, nearly 5,000 workers in slaughterhouses across the United States have been diagnosed with COVID-19, and at least 20 workers have died. We grieve this tragic and avoidable loss of life.

As Christians, we support the dignity of every person, as we are all made in the image of God. In this Easter season, as we remember Christ’s victory over death, we are heartbroken and profoundly disappointed by the failure of our government and major corporations to offer basic protection for your lives, and the lives of your loved ones.

Even without the threat of COVID-19, industrial slaughterhouses are among the most dangerous places to work in the United States. We know that every day you go to work, you endure long hours in physically as well as psychologically demanding environments, and you risk injuries from fumes, blades, and heavy machinery. Too many workers lack access to sufficient paid sick leave, health care, and unemployment benefits. Now, as we face the threat of COVID-19, too many workers are denied access to testing for the disease, or forced to pay for testing out of their own pockets. In some states, workers who choose not to return to work are ineligible for unemployment insurance.

People living in the United States eat, on average, 273 pounds of meat and poultry each year, per person. To meet that demand, the lines at meatpacking plants move quickly, which contributes to hazardous working conditions.

Our faith tells us that we are to love God, and to love our neighbor. In Isaiah 58, we read that we must take action to protect and care for workers. In that spirit, we wish to show God’s love by joining the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) to commit to Meatless May Mondays, a partial boycott to bring awareness to the plight of workers. And we will reduce our meat consumption in general, as long as these dangerous conditions persist. We will slow our consumption of meat so that the lines may also be slowed, so that workers can practice social distancing, and so that they are better able to avoid physical injury. Some may think of it as a fast “to loose the bonds of injustice.”

We pray that you and your families are safe. We pray that the hearts of the people in power will be moved to act mercifully. And we commit to taking this small action as we join our voices with yours to demand justice.

In Christ’s peace,

\*Affiliations and Organizations listed for identification purposes only and do not indicate endorsement

Querides Hermanes:

Le escribimos para decirles que nosotros, como Cristianos, apoyamos su solicitudes de un ambiente de trabajo más limpio y seguro. Las empacadoras de carne se han identificado como uno de los principales lugares, "puntos críticos" para la propagación de COVID-19 en los Estados Unidos. Al momento de escribir este artículo, casi 5,000 trabajadores en mataderos en todo Estados Unidos han sido diagnosticados con COVID-19, y al menos 20 trabajadores han sido muertos. Lamentamos estas pérdidas trágicas y evitables.

Como Cristianos, apoyamos la dignidad de todas las personas, porque todos somos creados a imagen de Dios. En esta época de Pascua, cuando nos acordamos de la victoria de Cristo sobre la muerte, estamos de corazón partidos y profundamente decepcionados con el fracaso del gobierno y gran corporaciones de ofrecerles protecciones básicas por sus vidas y las vidas de sus queridos familiares.

Mismo sin la amenaza del virus, los mataderos industriales son uno de los lugares más peligrosos para trabajar en los Estados Unidos. Sabemos que todos los días cuando vosotros van al trabajo, laboran duro físicamente en ambientes psicológicamente exigentes, corriendo riesgos de sufrir lesiones de máquinas pesadas y respirando humos. Muchos trabajadores no tienen acceso a beneficio de desempleo, servicios de salud, o sus días de enfermedad remunerados. Ahora con la amenaza del virus, muchos trabajadores tienen acceso denegado al test o son forzados a pagar por test con su propio dinero. En algunos de los estados, trabajadores que escogen no regresar al trabajo son inelegible para recibir beneficios de desempleo.

Personas viviendo en los Estados Unidos comen, en media, 273 libras de carne y pollo por año, por persona. Para poder satisfacer esa demanda, los mataderos y empacadoras tienen que trabajar rápidamente, contribuyendo a condiciones peligrosas al trabajador.

Nuestra fe nos enseña que debemos amar a Dios y al prójimo. En el profeta Isaías 58, leemos que necesitamos agir para proteger trabajadores. En este espíritu, deseamos demostrar el amor de Dios a vosotros y nos juntamos a la Liga de Los Ciudadanos Latinoamericanos Unidos (LULAC) en el mes de Mayo en el boicot parcial de carne en los Lunes durante todo el mes. Vamos reducir nuestro consumo de carne mientras persistan estas condiciones peligrosas. Bajaremos nuestro consumo de carne para que los mataderos y las empacadoras pueden trabajar más despacio, con distanciamiento social, les permitiendo que eviten lesiones físicas. Podemos pensar en esto como un ayuno para "soltar las cargas de opresión."

Oremos para que usted y sus familias estén bien y con salud. Oremos para que los corazones de la gente en poder se muevan para agir piadosamente. Y nos comprometemos a tomar esta pequeña acción al unir nuestras voces con las suyas para exigir justicia.

La Paz de Cristo,

\*Afiliaciones y organizaciones enumeradas solo con fines de identificación y no indican aprobación

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