

As we approach the Labor Day weekend, some will certainly be reflecting on the status of workers in the U.S. There will be Labor Day parades and other events to celebrate the role of the working class in this country. How many of us will take a good, hard look at how the system of capitalism perpetuates racism upon those who sell their labor? When Labor Day was established, it was clearly focused on excluding people of color, with domestic and agricultural workers not included in this new Federal holiday.

It's a challenge today for fast food restaurants to hire and keep help. Check out any local McDonald's and see signs for \$16 per hour. Most of our fast food workers in Spring Lake Michigan are white. So when I saw a sign advertising, "Hiring Now", at our local Arby's, I decided to go in and talk to the manager and ask him if he would consider hiring a person of color. He was very congenial and absolutely open to my suggestion.

About a month later, I pulled into the Arby's drive-through and there at the window was a young black woman serving me. "Progress," I thought. However, that was the last time I saw her.

Eventually I went back into the Arby's and spoke to the same manager. "What happened to the young black woman?", I asked. He said, "After about two weeks, she came to me and said, 'Look I know I'm black, but I didn't know what white people thought about me being black. I'm done'"

I continue to pray for that young woman, wondering if I had anything to do with her racial revelation. Did my request hurt her or did it have nothing to do with this? I know that racism is at the center of my own sinfulness and I work constantly to love others as God loves me.

Praying, in concert with action, is integral to dismantling racism.

Anne Armour