A Call to Fast from Fast Food
Nourish your soul with prayer, solidarity and love

Fast is one of the most transformative acts of faithful sacrifice embraced by different religions. And although forms and periods of fasting may vary, it is always rooted in a desire to grow spiritually and be closer to God.

Throughout history and across cultures, fasting has also been used as a powerful expression of solidarity and nonviolent action. This month, people of faith and goodwill pledged to Fast from Fast Food for 40 days in solidarity with the four million fast food workers who have been pushed to the margins of the economy by poverty wages.

Across the country, fast food workers are sticking together to call for $15 an hour and the right to organize. Their families cannot afford housing, food or transportation. By pledging to Fast from Fast Food you are making a conscious choice to stand with fast food workers, pray for them, and raise awareness about the low wages and working conditions that keep them and their families in poverty. Here’s what you can do:

- Fast from fast food for 40 days
- Pray for workers, that they be shrouded with courage and strength in their struggle for justice.
- Learn about the issues, educate others and invite them to Fast from Fast Food with you.
- Participate in actions supporting fast food workers and commit to join the national day of action on April 15.

As IWJ Board Member Dr. Jerry Taylor puts it: Fasting opens up a pathway to a spiritual energy that has been known to shake prisons and swing open locked doors. It’s time “to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke” (Isaiah 58:6). Pledge to Fast From Fast Food at bit.ly/fastfoodfast.

Will you Fast from Fast Food?

So many people have asked me “Why? Why are you leaving IWJ and what are you going to do?”

I’m leaving because I love IWJ. I love our work and mission and want it to survive and thrive for the long haul. I’ve always believed that founders shouldn’t stay around too long, because we bring our weirdnesses as well as our gifts. Watching my husband Stephen’s organization struggle after he died made me want to help with a smooth transition. Indeed, we “never know the day nor the hour,” so I wanted to transition while I could help it. Never has the IWJ staff and board been more awesome.

This is a crescendo moment. In music, a crescendo is a symbol for increasing in volume. You get louder, stronger, more powerful. This is a crescendo moment for me and IWJ.

I am not retiring. I’m too young, I have two kids in college and there is still so much work to do. I’ll be officially on staff with IWJ for part of this year, writing a book with Marien Casillas Pabellon on workers centers and helping introduce many of you to Rudy. Then, I will be looking for new ways to amplify my advocacy for justice and fairness for workers. I will always remain connected to IWJ and its work – my life’s passion. God is not finished with me yet. I’m open to God’s leading and colleagues’ ideas on how I can best serve the movement next.

IWJ is truly in a crescendo moment. We are doing fabulous work raising the minimum wage, organizing Fast from Fast Food, supporting Walmart workers and challenging wage theft locally and nationally. This is a time to amplify faith and worker voices. Our new Executive Director, Rudy López, is just the person to lead the work. Rudy’s passion for justice is rooted in his faith. Rudy brings experience, smarts and vision. And, movements for social change are led by young people. Rudy is younger than me (I hate to admit it). Oh yes, it is a crescendo moment for IWJ.

Thank you for the privilege of serving IWJ these last 18 years.
HELP: Walmart is Punishing Workers!

The work of justice will be peace (Isaiah 32:17) – but it will not always be easy.

Over the last couple of years, OUR Walmart members’ bravery, dedication and action have led to reformed policies for pregnant workers, more transparent scheduling, a raise for Walmart’s lowest paid workers and improved working conditions across the nation.

Walmart workers have not only made gains on the job, they’ve also inspired members of their faith and local communities to join them in courageous action. Last Black Friday, thousands showed up at more than 1,600 Walmart stores to join actions, prayer vigils and stand in solidarity with striking workers.

We recently received reports that a number of OUR Walmart members were being disciplined or fired for taking action on Black Friday.

Kiana is one of those workers. She was fired for demanding nothing more than what she rightfully deserved: wages that would allow her and her son to live in dignity.

Through prayerful action, you showed your solidarity with Kiana and other Walmart workers last Black Friday, and we urge you to stand with them again now.

No one should be punished for simply standing up for their rights and demanding a living wage that would allow them to support their family and contribute to their local communities.

Please visit www.iwj.org to find out what you and your congregation can do to support Walmart workers.

Living Wage Certification Program Launches in Two New Cities!

Remember that Living Wage Certification Program Toolkit that IWJ produced in collaboration with the Tompkins County Worker Center in Ithaca, NY and Just Economics in Asheville, NC?

Well, thanks to the support of donors like you, we were able to get the toolkit into more people’s hands... and guess what? IWJ affiliates and other local faith-based and consumer advocate groups have since launched several Living Wage Certification programs around the country.

The Coalition for Economic Justice in Buffalo, NY and Thrive! Living Wage Coalition in Durango, CO launched Living Wage Certification programs that recognize and support ethical employers that pay living wages (or at least significantly above the minimum wages) plus health care and treat workers fairly.

With a range of employers from various sectors, both programs are situated not only to lift up ethical employers but also to work with employers to raise standards for workers in their towns. Great work to both organizations!

Want to bring the program to your city? Contact Janel Bailey (jbailey@iwj.org) for questions and more information. To download a toolkit, visit http://www.iwj.org/network/ethical-business-leaders.

**Wage Theft Legal Clinic**

If you are a victim of wage theft, please visit the Wage Theft Clinic at 19 W. Jackson Blvd. (John Marshall Law School) on Mondays, from 5-8 p.m. You can also call the Wage Theft Hotline at (773) 998-1320. IWJ is partnering with local groups to bring the clinic to your community. Please check for updates.

**IWJ Donor Fund**

**LEAP of Faith Fund**

Thank you so much to everyone who took the LEAP of Faith with us. In two months, we raised about 15 percent of our target goal. We’re very happy AND grateful! But we also recognize that we have a long way to go. Will you support the LEAP of Faith? Can you pass along this link to family and friends: http://bit.ly/leapoffaith2015

**Pro-Bono: It’s “Paid back” Time!**

Thanks to the support of generous individual donors, the Dr. Scholl Foundation and the Lawyers Trust Fund of Illinois, IWJ’s Wage Theft Legal Clinic has helped workers recover more than $22,000 in unpaid wages. At the clinic, IWJ staff and volunteers provide clients with valuable legal advice about their rights, and what legal recourse might be available to them. The clinic has helped individuals recover claims ranging from $100 to $10,000. More recently, clinic volunteers assisted a man who was not paid overtime while working 60 to 70 hours a week for more than four years. After working with the IL Department of Labor and his employer he was able to receive the $7,100 he was owed in unpaid overtime.

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IWJ Affiliate Network
For detailed contact information, please visit www.iwj.org

Interfaith Groups
Arkansas Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice – Little Rock, AR
Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE) – California – Los Angeles, CA
CLUE – LA – Los Angeles, CA
East Bay Faith Alliance for a Moral Economy – Oakland, CA
Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice in San Diego – San Diego, CA
Interfaith Council on Economics and Justice – San Jose, CA
IWJ-Colorado/FRESC for Good Jobs and Strong Communities – Denver, CO
Connecticut Center for a New Economy – New Haven – New Haven, CT
Connecticut Center for a New Economy - Hartford – Hartford, CT
D.C. Jobs with Justice—Interfaith Worker Justice of Greater Washington – Washington, DC
Interfaith Action of Southwest Florida – Immokalee, FL
South Florida Interfaith Worker Justice – Miami, FL
DuPage Interfaith Worker Justice – Naperville, IL
Community, Faith and Labor Coalition – Indianapolis, IN

Interfaith Worker Justice of Kansas – Wichita, KS
Interfaith Worker Justice – NOLA – New Orleans, LA
Interfaith Worker Justice Southern Maine – Portland, ME
IWJ of Maryland – Baltimore, MD
Massachusetts Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice – Boston, MA
The Micah Center – Grand Rapids, MI
Interfaith Worker Justice – New Mexico – Santa Fe, NM
Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition – New York, NY
Labor-Religion Coalition – Latham, NY
Greater Binghamton Labor-Religion Coalition – Vestal, NY
Beloved Community Center – Greensboro, NC
Cincinnati Interfaith Committee on Worker Justice – Cincinnati, OH
Greater Columbus Jobs with Justice – Columbus, OH
Central Oklahoma Community Forum – Oklahoma City, OK
Religious Outreach Committee/Portland Jobs with Justice – Portland, OR
Springfield Solidarity Network/Jobs with Justice – Eugene, OR

Labor-Religion Coalition of Western Pennsylvania – Pittsburgh, PA
Philadelphia Area Jobs with Justice – Philadelphia, PA
Interfaith Worker Justice of East Tennessee – Knoxville, TN
O.U.R. Vanderbilt – Nashville, TN
Interfaith Coalition for Worker Justice of South Central Wisconsin – Madison, WI

Worker Centers
Winning our Wages Worker Center – Birmingham, AL
Arizona Worker Rights Center – Phoenix, AZ
Southside Workers Center – Tucson, AZ
Northwest Arkansas Workers’ Justice Center – Springdale, AR
Pilipino Workers Center – Los Angeles, CA
Young Workers United – San Francisco, CA
Economic Justice Coalition – Athens, GA
Workers Center for Racial Justice – Chicago, IL
Center for Worker Justice of Eastern Iowa – Iowa City, IA
Food AND Medicine/Eastern Maine Worker Center (formerly Portland Worker Center) – Brewer, ME
Southern Maine Workers’ Center – Portland, ME
MassCOSH – Dorchester, MA

Support the work of IWJ!

IWJ staff and board members are proud to introduce our new Executive Director, Rudy López. A devoted Catholic, long-time organizer and advocate for social justice, Rudy was also recently named one of 15 faith leaders to watch this year. He sees his work at IWJ as living out his life’s calling, and we are proud to welcome him to the growing IWJ family.

“There is wonderful energy and spirit that has made me feel very welcomed. I am very enthusiastic about the work we are doing, the great staff, and the possibilities ahead.” – Rudy

For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.”

– Jeremiah 29:11