

First and Center

Pastor's Blog

August 27, 2019



My mother grew up on a farm just during and after World War II. She now lives in a small city, and she loves to laugh at folk who have always lived in cities and don't have a clue how food grows or cows get milked, or who worry about eating eggs because of the baby chickens inside (clue: the eggs we eat are unfertilized, so no baby chickens). She recently sent out a query in her monthly column in her church's newsletter to see how many people knew how potatoes grow. Turns out not very many in her church, anyway.

Unless you are lucky enough to live near a farm and can get fresh food/eggs/meat there, most of the food we eat comes from far away, much of it from California, Texas, the Pacific Northwest, Florida, or Mexico. The people who do the physically demanding, dangerous, and dirty work of planting, cultivating, harvesting, caring for animals, slaughtering, and packaging that food often get paid a low wage and (in the U.S.) very often are immigrants, very often undocumented. Back in the day of my mother's childhood, much food was grown on small farms like my grandparent's. They lost their farm in the late 50's when corporate farms became the norm. The whole world of farming is vastly different from what she remembers. But even then, people who worked farms did not make a lot of money.

It's Labor Day weekend. Some people will work on Labor Day, because many stores are open, first responders have extra work, and, yes, farmworkers need to be out there caring for plants and animals every day. ICE targets food-related industries because we all know they exploit undocumented immigrant labor (while maintaining in public that they thought the papers were legit...) On Monday, take a few moments to pray for all workers who are exploited, underpaid, working in dangerous conditions, abused or harassed, or working at jobs for which they are ill-suited, because they can't get any other work. Give thanks for all the ways you benefit from the labor of others. Take a moment to think about how you can advocate for those who make your life better by their work.

And by the way, potatoes grow underground!

~ Rev. Shelly Stackhouse
Transitional Minister