



A Personal Journey in Faith in Work

As a CEO, business owner, or leader of a team or organization do you ever find it challenging to be authentic at all times when having to weigh the perspectives of all the stakeholders whom you engage with – including spouses and family? The engaged audience at BELIEVES on Tuesday, May 8, 2018, had the opportunity to discuss this and more when **Patrick Franks – Co-Founder and “Garbage Man” at Go Doorstep** (<http://www.go-doorstep.com>) led a discussion on his **“Personal Journey in Faith in Work.”**



“To prepare for this session, I decided to go back and look at what the Catholic Church had to say about integrating faith in work,” Franks said after first taking the time to ask all who were present to introduce themselves so the session could be as discussion-filled as possible.

“One of the things I read was *Rerum Novarum*, the encyclical issued by Pope Leo XIII in 1891 on the Rights and Duties of Capital and Labor (http://w2.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum.html). The direct translation of *Rerum Novarum* is ‘of the new things.’”

Franks shared one of the first things that stood out in *Rerum Novarum* was the explanation that “capital cannot do without labor, nor labor without capital.”

Pope Leo XIII went on to say in *Rerum Novarum* that “mutual agreement results in the beauty of good order, while perpetual conflict necessarily produces confusion and savage barbarity. ... There is no intermediary more powerful than religion (whereof the Church is the interpreter and guardian) in drawing the rich and the working class together, by reminding each of its duties to the other, and especially of the obligations of justice.”

Another focus of *Rerum Novarum* that Franks spoke of was the encyclical’s words on the role of the worker.

Franks shared, “The encyclical states, ‘The following duties bind the wealthy owner and the employer: not to look upon their work people as their bondsmen, but to respect in every man his dignity as a person ennobled by Christian character. They are reminded that, according to natural reason and Christian philosophy, working for gain is creditable, not shameful, to a man, since it enables him to earn an honorable livelihood; but to misuse men as though they were things in the pursuit of gain, or to value them solely for their physical powers - that is truly shameful and inhuman. Again justice demands that, in dealing with the working man, religion and the good of his soul must be kept in mind.’”

Franks closed out his references to *Rerum Novarum* by highlighting the takeaway he had from the encyclical focused on our relationship to the world created by God.

“God’s given us this world as a place of exile, not a final resting place,” Franks quoted from the encyclical.

Having layed all of these points out on the table for the discussion, Franks then directed his remarks to what he as an owner faces day in and day out.

“One of the challenges we face is we’re both a boss and a person. How do we juggle and integrate all of this?”

For Franks, the key is to keep in mind what our final destination is.

Perhaps due to this perspective, Franks, who grew up in Atlanta and then worked in politics and business before starting At Your Door Step, has always been interested in businesses that many would consider unsexy like taxes and trash.

“They’re easy to understand,” he commented. “In waste, in general it’s population growth plus inflation year-over-year. Growth isn’t too quick, but steady.”



At Your Door Step, which has now been doing door-to-door waste recycling pick-up in both Atlanta and Nashville for three years, has a workforce that is all part-time.

“Our people are typically 25 to 50-year-old, single parents with full-time jobs,” stated Franks. “We try to hire internally, and we hire residents a lot. It’s great.”

Franks was asked by one attendee if he could share about how he engages with his employees.

“People will say, ‘it must be nice to not have a boss.’ Yes and no. You go from having one boss to many (including family),” Franks said. “With people, you have to find something you have in common with people. So it’s good when we can engage with the employees and get to understand ‘why are you doing this – because we know it’s not sexy.’”

Franks went on to add, “We often ask people, ‘do you have a goal in mind because if we’re aware, and you’re committed, then we can help you get there.’”

He also mentioned, “For a lot of folks, this job is one where they have a boss but really don’t feel like it. In this job, they’ll also at times have residents leave them tips, or bottles of water. Sometimes our employees will say, ‘this is weird, why are they tipping me for taking out their trash?’”

One thing Franks said is a challenge for him in all this is managing grace and accountability.

“I’m not perfect at this, but I’m getting better,” he said. “If anyone’s got ideas, I’m open. In life, and in particular in business, you’ll meet people who challenge you and who will play a part in you growing.”

Kate Franks, Patrick’s wife who was present at the session with their newborn child commented, “I’ve witnessed an immense improvement for Patrick thru faith in all this, including faith in people.”

Fernando Silva, a regular at BELIEVES, then asked Franks how he handles the life situations that his employees encounter while they’re a part of his team.

Franks recalled a few anecdotes.

“There’s one employee who calls all the time, but I don’t think he has someone to talk to,” said Franks. “We also sometimes do give loans to employees (less than \$1,000) – but we don’t charge interest because we’re not trying to make money on it. We also buy things like tires for people’s cars at times.”

CTK Parishioner Paul Monardo then asked, “How do you take Pope Francis and the Catholic Church’s efforts on sustainability, and channel that or think about it?”

Franks responded, “We do have a responsibility there. Broadly, in the United States we’re a consumer society. All we want to do is buy stuff. Even as business owners, we get tax breaks to buy stuff. It’s cheap to build a landfill here in Georgia too – about \$40 per ton, versus three times as much in states like New York and California. In contrast, look at Europe – people recycle and ‘source separate.’ Culturally, they’re not ‘consumers’ as much as us, and they don’t have as much space. What we do is help the property owners quantify what they recycle to report to the City of Atlanta.”

Monardo then asked another question.

“I have a friend who owns fast food restaurants, and he says ‘we find people who are happy and teach them how to cook, not the opposite.’ How do you all approach this?”



“We deal a little with that for those at middle management positions, and can get a couple of middle managers who can screw things up,” Franks replied. “I’ve never managed people before, so I am learning.”

The other thing Franks added is that he finds people always respect the authenticity present when he goes out and does the work with them on occasion.

“It’s actions, more than words,” remarked Tim Doyle, CTK parishioner.

His Way at Work Executive Director Armando del Bosque then asked Franks what he sees he’ll be doing in 10 years.

“I don’t know. Some advice I always got was ‘if you don’t build a business like you’ll run it forever, then you will be running it forever.’ I like what I do.”