

1. May 2024

The sanctification of the work  
Feast of St. Joseph the Worker

*Col 3:14-15,17,23-24*

*Above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Whatever your task, work heartily, as serving the Lord and not men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you are serving the Lord Christ.*

On this day, which is generally celebrated as Labour Day, it is very appropriate that the Church associates St Joseph with it. In this way, the Church conveys the message that even the foster father of Jesus, and thus the Lord Himself, sanctified human work. If God Himself, in His Incarnation, has also entered and penetrated this area, then no work is too lowly, especially if - as the Apostle advises us - we do it "*as serving the Lord and not men*".

We see how the holy Apostle wants to relate everything to the Lord, and this is the important message for us as far as work is concerned; it too comes from the Lord and is for the Lord.

If we understand it in this way, then it is a participation in the Kingdom of God, which also has a physical component on earth. Let us allow these thoughts to have a deeper effect on us: Everything I do, if I do it for the glory of God, participates in the building of the kingdom of God on earth!

The apostle's advice to do our work with joy is important. Here we are pointed in a direction that we need to understand more deeply.

God has called His creation into being out of love, including us. The whole of existence - even if we have to suffer the destruction caused by sin - sings in its depths the love

song of God, because He has done everything well! (cf. Gen 1:31). To collaborate with this creation is to ennoble it and also to purify it from its lostness.

Let us think, for example, of something very ordinary: a meal. How is it prepared? It can be prepared with the least possible effort, it can be served unlovingly, but it can also be served with delight. In this "serving with joy", the meal is ennobled; it even becomes something special through love; it becomes the essential, because God gave us food out of love, He gave it to us - humanly speaking - with joy!

So if we do our work in the Lord and for the Lord with joy, then in the area entrusted to us, we bring the work to its deeper meaning, it reflects His creative love!

Now what about the resistance we experience in our work, the weeds, the dirt, the fragility of things, etc.?

Perhaps we can look at them in this way: Overcoming the difficulties and resistances at work is part of the struggle into which we are all drawn by the Fall. If we accept it (always in the Lord), we will bring things to their goal in spite of the adversities! At this particular level - where work is located in its various dimensions - we participate in the revelation of the children of God, for which the whole of creation is waiting with a sigh! (cf. Rom 8:19).

Let us, then, carry out our work with joy and great care, thus opening up the deeper meaning of our activities. Let us remember Saint Joseph who, we can be sure, worked with His divine Son! When we work for the Lord, we work with God! So it is not only in proclamation in the strict sense that we can work for God! No, all areas are permeated by Him if we remain in Him! No work is too small if it is imbued with love and done out of love!