

## **THEME, SCRIPTURE, REFLECTION, PRAYER, CHALLENGE**

### **DAY 16 MODEL OF WORKMEN**

May 1, or “May Day,” was celebrated throughout the Communist world as a way of supposedly honoring the role and importance of laborers in Marxist countries. The Communist conception of work, as almost an end in itself was, of course, very different from the Christian understanding, and in 1955, to highlight this difference, Pope Pius XII instituted the feast of St. Joseph the Worker.

St. Joseph spent a lifetime laboring as a carpenter. His primary motivation for working was not a quest for riches or status, but a desire to serve God and to care for his family in a loving way. Joseph never worked any miracles; he never made any important speeches; he wasn’t a public figure, but was known only as a humble carpenter. Joseph labored in obscurity, but was nonetheless given an important part in God’s plan.

Work is not intended to be an end in itself or a path to earthly riches; rather, it’s meant to glorify God and to help us prepare for eternity. As Jesus said,

*Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and decay destroy, and thieves break in and steal. But store up treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor decay destroys, nor thieves break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be. (Matthew 6:20-21).*

No matter our jobs, we spend many of our waking hours working. If we view our daily tasks as meaningless unpleasanties, then doubtless we will become bitter and fail to cultivate any virtue. On the contrary, if we resolve to be sanctified through our jobs, we will develop an honorable Christian character.

We should also guard against working too much. The vast majority of men who work too much do so for unhealthy reasons: avoiding home, getting unmet needs met, the need for approval, etc. Workaholics are of no benefit to themselves, the family, or society. St. Joseph is an able aide at achieving a proper work-life balance. Consider that St. Joseph was willing to leave his work behind when he fled to Egypt to protect Christ.

St. Joseph also serves as the model workman for the imitation of those who work for the salvation of souls, especially deacons, priests, bishops, and religious. Consecrated souls are to work diligently and faithfully in God’s vineyard. This work, too, can be difficult and burdensome.

*St. Joseph, Model of Workmen, help me to make Christ known through the way I carry myself at work. Pray that I may work diligently and faithfully, and help me to make time for God, family, and rest. Pray the [Litany of St. Joseph](#).*

**Daily Challenge: Take a few moments to examine your work/life balance, and ask the Holy Spirit along with St. Joseph to inspire your thoughts, desires, and decisions as to what might need to be adjusted to reflect God’s priorities. Ask for God’s grace to adjust.**