

*Meditations in preparation for the Solemnity of St. Joseph
Institute Servants of the Lord and the Virgin of Matará*

Meditation on Day 22 (March 10)

“Model of the workers”

Pray for us.

Saint John Paul II writes in his Encyclical *Laborem Exercens* that work is every kind of act done by man regardless of its characteristics or circumstances; it means all human activity that can or should be recognized as work among the multiple activities that man is capable of and to which he is predisposed by nature itself and by virtue of his humanity. Made in the image and likeness of God¹ in the visible world and placed in it to dominate the earth², man is therefore, from the beginning, called to work.

In his Apostolic Exhortation *Redemptoris Custos*, on the devotion to St. Joseph he explains that *“Work was the daily expression of love in the life of the Family of Nazareth. The Gospel specifies the kind of work Joseph did in order to support his family: he was a carpenter. This simple word sums up Joseph's entire life. For Jesus, these were hidden years, the years to which Luke refers after recounting the episode that occurred in the Temple: “And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them” (Lk 2:51). This “submission” or obedience of Jesus in the house of Nazareth should be understood as a sharing in the work of Joseph. Having learned the work of his presumed father, he was known as “the carpenter's son.” If the Family of Nazareth is an example and model for human families, in the order of salvation and holiness, so too, by analogy, is Jesus' work at the side of Joseph the carpenter. In our own day, the Church has emphasized this by instituting the liturgical memorial of St. Joseph the Worker on May 1. Human work, and especially manual labor, receives special prominence in the Gospel. Along with the humanity of the Son of God, work too has been taken up in the mystery of the Incarnation, and has also been redeemed in a special way. At the workbench where he applied his trade together with Jesus, Joseph brought human work closer to the mystery of the Redemption”*³

In the human growth of Jesus "in wisdom, age and grace" the virtue of industriousness represented a notable part, being "that work, is a good of man" that "transforms nature" and makes man "in a sense more human."⁴

The importance of work in the life of man requires that it “help all men to approach God, Creator and Redeemer, to participate in their salvific plans in regard to man and the world and to the world already be known and assimilated, deepening in their lives friendship with Christ, assuming by faith a living participation in his triple mission of priest, prophet and king”.^{5 6}

¹ GN1:26

² GN1:28

³ St. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Redemptoris Custos*, August 15, 1989, n. 22

⁴ Carta Encíc. *Laborem exercens* (14 de septiembre de 1981), 9: AAS 73 (1981), pp. 599 s.

⁵ Encyclical Letter, *Laborem exercens* (September 14th, 1981), 24: AAS 73, 1980, p.638. The Supreme Pontifices in recent times have continuously presented St. Joseph as a “model” of workers; for example, Leo XIII, in His encyclical letter, *Quamquam pluries* (August 15, 1889), p. 180; Benedict XV, in his *Motu Proprio Bonum Sane* (July

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It is, in short, the sanctification of everyday life, which everyone must achieve according to their own state and that can be encouraged according to a model accessible to all: "Saint Joseph is the model of the humble, which Christianity elevates to great destinations; Saint Joseph is the proof that in order to be good and authentic followers of Christ, "great things" are not needed, but that only common, human, simple, but true and authentic virtues are required".^{7 8}

We pray for all those in need of work, that St. Joseph help them to provide the necessities of life to their families.

25th, 1920); Pius XII in his Instructions, (March 11, 1945), 4 AAS37 (1945), p.72; Instructions (May 1st, 1955) AAS47 (1955) 406; John XIII, Radio Message (May 1st, 1960); AAS 52 (1960), pg. 398 (Everything in Spanish Edition)

⁶ St. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation Redemptoris Custos, August 15th, 1989), n. 23

⁷ Paul VI, Alocución (March 19 of 1969): Insegnamenti, VII (1969), p. 1268.

⁸ St. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation Redemptoris Custos, August 15, 1989, n. 24