

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, May 1st 2024

Partake in God's creative work

Pope Pius XII instituted the feast of St. Joseph the Worker on 1 May 1955 in response to the surge of atheistic communism after World War II. The Pope dedicated all the workers of the world to the patronage of St. Joseph.

His only concern was providing his family with food and shelter. He taught his child life lessons, such as caring for the neighbour and being compassionate and merciful. When that child grew up, he taught the world mercy, compassion, and love for God and humanity. Looking at Jesus, the townsfolk kept saying, "Is he not the carpenter's son?"

The Church calls us to look at Joseph and meditate on his life and the examples he sets before us. He reminds us that hard work and struggle for excellence are essential to participating in God's creative work.

Rooted in the World of God and nurtured by centuries of reflection, the Church portrays human labour as a "calling", an invitation to participate in God's ongoing creation. Just as the Creator shaped the world, we, too, shape our surroundings through our labour.

"Joseph, a carpenter from Nazareth who trusts in God's plan for his young fiancée and himself, reminds the Church to keep her eyes on what the world deliberately ignores," wrote Pope Francis during the Year of St. Joseph in 2021. A worker produces and provides for his family, and the father provides not only food but much more. St. Joseph played that role to perfection.

Be it May 1 or any other day of the year, St. Joseph is the perfect example of a worker and provider. Imitate him. Go to him.