

I need you, you need me.

Adam and Eve were told by God to fill the earth and subdue it (Gen 1:28). Therefore, man and woman did have work to do, but it was not experienced as a burden. Only after Original Sin did work come to be perceived in this way: Eve would bring forth her children in pain and Adam would only get his food by the "sweat of his brow" (Gen 3:16, 19).

Human work proceeds directly from persons created in the image of God and called to prolong the work of creation by subduing the earth, both with and for one another. Hence work is a duty: "If anyone will not work, let him not eat" [2 Thess 3:10]. Work honors the Creator's gifts and the talents received from him (CCC #2427). Note that our dignity is that we are to work with God to perfect creation.

Work can be sanctifying and redemptive. [Work] can also be redemptive. By enduring the hardship of work in union with Jesus, the carpenter of Nazareth and the one crucified on Calvary, man collaborates in a certain fashion with the Son of God in his redemptive work. He shows himself to be a disciple of Christ by carrying the cross, daily, in the work he is called to accomplish. Work can be a means of sanctification and a way of animating earthly realities with the Spirit of Christ (CCC #2427).

Work is an acceptable sacrifice to God. [The] laity, dedicated as they are to Christ and anointed by the Holy Spirit, are marvelously called and prepared so that even richer fruits of the Spirit maybe produced in them. For all their works, prayers, and apostolic undertakings, family and married life, daily work, relaxation of mind and body, if they are accomplished in the Spirit—indeed even the hardships of life if patiently borne—all these become spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. In the celebration of the Eucharist these may most fittingly be offered to the Father along with the body of the Lord (CCC # 901).

To work is to participate in the common good. Participation [in the common good] is achieved first of all by taking charge of the areas for which

one assumes personal responsibility: by the care taken for the education of his family, by conscientious work, and so forth, man participates in the good of others and of society (CCC # 1914).

Therefore, we work not only to benefit ourselves but also to contribute to the good of others and society in general. We do this first by caring for our own needs to the extent possible, thus not burdening others unnecessarily. We also contribute to the common good by supplying our talent and work in such a way as to contribute to the overall availability of goods and services in the community. We supply our human talent and the fruits of our labor to others, while at the same time purchasing the goods and services of others. To return to our opening theme, here are some lyrics from the song "I Need You to Survive": I need you, you need me. ... It is God's will that every need be supplied. You are important to me, I need you to survive.

And American labor has raised the nation's standard of living and contributed to the greatest production the world has ever known and the labor movement has brought us closer to the realization of our traditional ideals of economic and political democracy.

Labor Day makes us mindful of our interconnectedness; we need one another in order to survive. Consider how we are each called to contribute as well as how we benefit from the labor of others. Even that simple can of corn you pull from the grocery store shelf has thousands of people standing behind it: from those who stock the shelves to the truckers who transport the product to the store; from the regional warehouse workers to the rail operators who supply the warehouse; from the farmers and harvesters to the granary workers. Then there are others such as those who supply fertilizers that aid in growth and those who developed innumerable agricultural technologies over the years. People also labored to build the roads and rails over which the products travel. Others supply fuel for the trucks, combines, and locomotives. Coal miners work hard to supply the electricity needed all along the way. Still others in banking and business take risks and supply the funds to run agricultural, transportation, and food

distribution businesses and networks. The list of people who have worked so that you and I can buy that can of corn at the store is almost endless. It is appropriate, therefore, that the nation pays tribute on Labor Day to the creator of so much of the nation's strength, freedom, and leadership – the American worker.

September 6, is Labor Day in the United States and many Americans celebrate Labor Day with parades, picnics and parties – festivities very similar to those outlined by the first proposal for a holiday, which suggested that the day should be observed with – a street parade to exhibit "the strength and esprit de corps of the trade and labor organizations" of the community, followed by a festival for the recreation and amusement of the workers and their families. This became the pattern for the celebrations of Labor Day.

According to the New Jersey Historical Society, after President Cleveland signed the law creating a national Labor Day, the Paterson Morning Call published an opinion piece stating that "the souvenir pen should go to Alderman Matthew Maguire of this city, who is the undisputed author of Labor Day as a holiday." Both Maguire and McGuire attended the country's first Labor Day parade in New York City that year. The first Labor Day holiday was celebrated on Tuesday, September 5, 1882, in New York City, in accordance with the plans of the Central Labor Union. By 1894, 23 more states had adopted the holiday, and on June 28, 1894, President Grover Cleveland signed a law making **the first Monday in September of each year a national holiday. Wish you all Happy Labor Day and God's blessings for all our labor within our call/vocation.**

Be Blessed and Be a blessing to others.

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