

BLESS THE WORK OF OUR HANDS, O LORD

**O Lord, You are our Father; we are the clay and You the potter:
we are all the work of Your hands.**

Isaiah 64: 7



**Let us pause and remember that we are in God's holy presence.
At this moment Lord we turn our thoughts to You.
We will leave aside our chores and preoccupations.
We will take rest and refreshment in Your presence Lord.
May the favor of the Lord our God be ours.**

HYMN: SIMPLE GIFTS

**'Tis the gift to be simple, 'Tis the gift to be free,
'Tis the gift to come down where you ought to be,
And when we find ourselves in the place just right,
'Twill be in the valley of love and delight.**

**When true simplicity is gained
To bow and to bend we shan't be ashamed,
To turn, turn will be our delight,
'Till by turning, turning we come round right.**

**Prosper the work of our hands! Prosper the work of our hands!
Psalm 90: 17**

PSALM143

**Lord, hear my prayer; in Your faithfulness listen to my pleading;
answer me in Your justice.
My spirit is faint within me; my heart is dismayed.
I remember the days of old; I ponder all Your deeds;
the works of Your hands I recall.
I stretch out my hands to You; I thirst for You like a parched land.
Hasten to answer me, Lord; for my spirit fails me. Do not hide Your
face from me, lest I become like those descending to the pit.
At dawn let me hear of Your kindness, for in You I trust.
Show me the path I should walk, for to You I entrust my life.
Rescue me, Lord, from my foes, for in You I hope.
Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God.
May Your kind spirit guide me on ground that is level.
For Your name's sake, Lord, give me life;
in Your justice lead me out of distress.
In Your kindness Lord, watch over me for I am your servant.**

**Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden,
and I will give you rest.**

Matthew 11: 28



SCRIPTURE: PSALM 127
**Unless the Lord build the house,
they labor in vain who build.
Unless the Lord guard the city,
in vain does the guard keep watch.
It is vain for you to rise early
and put off your rest at night,
To eat bread earned by hard toil—
all this God gives to His beloved.**

SCRIPTURE: 2 THESSALONIANS 3: 6–12

The Lord is faithful; He will strengthen you and guard you from the evil one.

We are confident of you in the Lord that what we instruct you, you are doing and will continue to do.

May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the endurance of Christ.

We instruct you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to shun any brother or sister who conducts him/herself in a disorderly way and not according to the tradition they received from us.

For you know how one must imitate us. For we did not act in a disorderly way among you, nor did we eat food received free from anyone. On the contrary, in toil and drudgery, night and day we worked, so as not to burden any of you. Not that we do not have the right. Rather, we wanted to present ourselves as a model for you, so that you might imitate us. In fact, when we were with you, we instructed you that if anyone was unwilling to work, neither should that one eat.

We hear that some are conducting themselves among you in a disorderly way, by not keeping busy but minding the business of others. Such people we instruct and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to work quietly and to eat their own food.

But you, brothers and sisters, do not be remiss in doing good.

REFLECTION; WHAT IS WORK?

Is work a blessing or a curse? Is work the despicable result of evil or a moral medium with great potential for doing good among humankind? Is work a burden we must bear or an opportunity that we embrace on our way to personal maturity? These are important questions; and their answers reside in the realm of faith.

Work is a means of serving God, caring for God's creation and helping other people. Work is an investment of our abilities for the good of various communities. Work is an exercise of stewardship. Work is a medium for contributing positively to society.

Work and worship are closely related. Both develop out of our love for God and desire to serve God.

We find our work when we find a particular role in life where the love and talents within us match up with challenges, problems and needs around us. We experience a sense of belonging in that role. That specific work appeals to each of us as my work, work to which we can give ourselves and through which we can make a difference for good in other people's lives. Let me speak of this truth another way. God calls all of us to invest our lives in work that brings us fulfillment and makes a contribution to others — work that enables to be who we were created to be.

You know this reality. A young woman waits tables by day so she can pursue her work in a theater at night. A man logs billable hours seeing clients in his office so he can give away his expertise in an organization that has captured his imagination and inspired his commitment. A person shoulders the varied tasks of a government office because of deep devotion to the work of liberation for all people.

Your job may be drudgery while your work is poetry. Your job can seem mundane even as your work appears as artistry. Though you periodically feel obligation related to your job, a constant sense of urgency motivates your work.

And, what about money? Can we speak of jobs and work apart from material gain? What is the role of finances in relation to jobs and work?

I think of an episode from the life of a woman who was down in a ditch cleaning up a man inebriated with alcohol to the point of sickness. A passerby observed what was happening and said to the woman with disgust, "I would not do that for a million dollars." The helping woman looked up from her unenviable task and responded with equally apparent compassion, "I wouldn't either."

Jobs are about money. Work is about life. Work has to do with one's spirit and the nature of one's love.

You know what is more important in work: investment rather than income, faithfulness rather than success, personal integrity rather than social recognition. It's not what you possess that matters, but what possesses you.

PRAYERS of INTERCESSION

We pray for all who labor.

May You, O Magnificent God, fill us with the spirit of creative imagination and a ready willingness to help the world around us through the work of our minds and hands..

We remember all those who are unable to work because of disability or illness.

Bless them O Lord, with a sense of resignation and patience and let them offer their suffering for the needs of the world.

We empathize with those who are willing to work but are unable to find meaningful employment.

Lord, give them a sense of persistence and patience as they willing seek employment.

We remember all employers.

May they realize the dignity of their employees and give them healthy, safe and sustainable wages.

We ask Your blessings on all workers.

Lord, fill them with honesty that they may give a full day of work for a full pay and may they be dedicated to the work that they do.

We honor and salute all who labor.

Lord, help us to always remember that all types of labor are important and is dignified in Your eyes.

HYMN: IF I HAD A HAMMER

If I had a hammer I'd hammer in the morning I'd hammer in the evening all over this land.

I'd hammer out danger. I'd hammer out a warning. I'd hammer out love between my brothers and my sisters all over this land.

If I had a bell I'd ring it in the morning. I'd ring it in the evening all over this land. I'd ring out danger. I'd ring out a warning. I'd ring out love between my brothers and my sisters all over this land.

If I had a song I'd sing it in the morning. I'd sing it in the evening all over this land. I'd sing out danger I'd sing out a warning I'd sing out love between my brothers and my sisters all over this land.

Well I've got a hammer and I've got a bell. And I've got a song to sing all over this land. It's the hammer of justice. It's the bell of freedom. It's the song about love between my brothers and my sisters all over this land.

PRAYER FOR THE SPIRIT OF WORK

Glorious St. Joseph, model of all who pass their life in labor,
obtain for us the grace to work in a spirit of penance to atone for our many sins; to work conscientiously, putting the call of duty above our own inclinations; to work with gratitude and joy, considering it an honor to use and develop by our labor the gifts we have received from God; to work with order, peace, moderation, and patience, without ever recoiling before weariness or difficulties.

Help us to work, above all, with purity of intention and with detachment from self, having always before my eyes the hour of death and the accounting which I must render of time lost, talents wasted, good omitted, and vain complacency in success, which is so fatal to the work of God. All for Jesus, all after your example, O holy Joseph! This shall be our watchword in life and death. Amen.



The ability to work hard is a gift of God's grace.

Work deserves enthusiasm.

God wants us to do the work that is before us.

Hard work is a lifetime commitment.

Hard work deserves special honor, and will be rewarded.



Saint John Baptist de La Salle
and all you holy Brothers who have gone before us,
help us to realize that whatever our hands find to do,
we will do it with all our might.

Live Jesus in our hearts. Forever!
