

A PRAYER FOR THE FEAST OF ST. JOSEPH THE WORKER



Introduction: (read by leader when prayer is used communally)
To foster reflection on and devotion to St. Joseph and as a response to the Communist “May Day” celebrations for workers, Pope Pius X11 instituted the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker in 1955. Recognition of the dignity of human labour is found in numerous Scripture passages beginning in the Book of Genesis. In their work, humans fulfill the call in Genesis to care for the Earth (Gn. 2:15) and to be productive for the world through their labour. Through work, humans become co-creators with God. Scriptural foundations focusing on the dignity of labour and justice for workers find echoes in the great works of Catholic Social Tradition. St. Joseph the carpenter is an example of the sacredness of human labour.

All: Opening

Loving God, Creator of the universe, in every age you call us to use and develop our gifts for the good of others. With St. Joseph as our guide, help us to do the work you ask of each of us, so as, to realize your kin-dom of love, justice, and peace. Grant this through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Opening Song: You may wish to use the you-tube video and song, “Of Joseph the Carpenter” composed and sung by Richard Cootes, an Australian teacher. It may be found on the following link <https://youtu.be/vbO6cMDv3G4> Used with direct permission of Richard Cootes. Or you may wish to choose another song/hymn as desired.

Reading 1: Genesis 2: 5 -7, 15

No shrub had yet appeared on the earth^l and no plant had yet sprung

up, for God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no one to work the ground, but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground. Then God formed a human from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the human became a living being God took the human and put the human in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

**A moment of quiet reflection and then share with the person next to you or, if praying alone, in a conversation with a friend later:
How am I called today, even if I am physically limited, to continue to care for the Earth and to work for the building of community that reflects God's Design for the world?
Or share a short story of the work you do or have done that contributes/has contributed to the lives of others. (Sometimes our stories are gift to one another and enable us to come to know each other more deeply and respectfully.)**

Reading 2: Pope Francis, *Patris Corde* #6

An aspect of Saint Joseph that has been emphasized from the time of the first social Encyclical, Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*, is his relation to work. Saint Joseph was a carpenter who earned an honest living to provide for his family. From him, Jesus learned the value, the dignity and the joy of what it means to eat bread that is the fruit of one's own labour. In our own day there is a renewed need to appreciate the importance of dignified work, of which Saint Joseph is an exemplary patron. Work is a means of participating in the work of salvation, an opportunity to hasten the coming of the Kingdom, to develop our talents and abilities, and to put them at the service of society and communion. It becomes an opportunity for the fulfilment not only of oneself, but also of that primary cell of society which is the family. A family without work is particularly vulnerable to difficulties, tensions, estrangement and even break-up. How can we speak of human dignity without working to ensure that everyone is able to earn a decent living?

Working persons, whatever their job may be, are cooperating with God himself, and in some way become creators of the world around us. The crisis of our time, which is economic, social, cultural and spiritual, can serve as a summons for all of us to rediscover the value, the importance and necessity of work for bringing about a new "normal" from which no one is excluded. Saint Joseph's work

reminds us that God himself, in becoming man, did not disdain work.
(A moment of reflection)

A Litany of St. Joseph, Worker and Parent (Lisa Freemantle and Les Miller, "Words for the Journey" – adapted)

St. Joseph we thank you for your care and witness for workers everywhere. As patron saint of Canada, pray with us that all workers might understand the dignity and importance of work in creating a society of love and ensure that employers treat workers with, dignity, justice and fairness.

For all those who are forced to leave their land for the sake of freedom.

All: St. Joseph pray for us

For parents raising children in harsh and poor circumstances.

All: St. Joseph pray for us.

For all who are unemployed or underemployed.

All: St. Joseph, pray for us.

For those forced to work beyond their energy and capacity.

All: St. Joseph, pray for us.

For those who are no longer able to work that they may realize how they continue to gift the world by their presence, prayer and acts of kindness.

All: St. Joseph, pray for us

For the gift of your work, witness and love.

All: We give thanks.

Closing Prayer: (Lisa Freemantle and Les Miller, as above and adapted)

God of Love and Justice, let us serve generously and walk with St.

Joseph the Worker by

feeding the hungry,

befriending the lonely,

comforting the hurting,

affirming the afflicted,

encouraging the despairing and

Helping the overworked.

We make this prayer in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Closing song/hymn of your choice

