



DIOCESE OF LAFAYETTE

1408 Carmel Drive
Lafayette, Louisiana 70501-5215
Telephone: 337.261.5614 Fax: 337.261.5603

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Pastoral Letter for the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker

(To be read at all masses on the weekend of April 27-28, 2024)

My Dear People of the Diocese of Lafayette,

Wednesday, May 1st, the Church celebrates the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker. It is also designated by resolution, St. Joseph the Worker Day in the State of Louisiana. We look to the example of St. Joseph to remind us that human labor is noble, creative and a means of enriching the lives of others. The human person, given reason and free will by God, imitates the creative power of God, sustains the human life he is given by God, meets the needs of his family and enriches the community he lives in.

In the miracle of the incarnation, God became one of us in the person of Jesus Christ our Savior. He entered our world in the Holy Family under the care and support of St. Joseph His foster father. The Bible tells us that St. Joseph worked as a carpenter providing for the needs of the Holy Family. St. John Paul II reminds us that after Jesus was found by Mary and Joseph in the temple, “He returned with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them”. The Pope remarks that it should be understood that Jesus shared in the work of his father and He was known in the Gospels as, “the carpenter’s Son”.

Work is part of God’s plan for the human person. To this end, Pope Pius XII established the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker on May 1, 1955. He wrote, “The humble craftsman of Nazareth not only personifies to God and the Holy Church the dignity of the laborer, but St. Joseph is also always the provident guardian of us and our families.” The Pope saw the danger of unbridled capitalism or atheistic socialism. Both demean the nobility of human labor by reducing human labor to only a servant to company profits or an impersonal servant of the state.

On the feast of St. Joseph the Worker, we are reminded that for the laborer, St. Joseph is a just man, a faithful spouse and father and a hard worker. He cares for his family, he guarded and protected Mary and Jesus, was obedient to God and faithful to his calling. On May 1st, we pray that St. Joseph inspire and pray for all who labor in this life.

Faithfully yours,

Most Reverend J. Douglas Deshotel, D.D.
Bishop of Lafayette

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