

May 1, 2023

Good Monday Morning!

Happy Anniversary and Happy Birthday to all who are celebrating special days this month!



1. Today's Readings: [Monday of the Fourth Week of Easter | USCCB](#)

2. The RE Corner with Jan Heithaus: Why is there an optional memorial for St. Joseph the Worker? Today's article gives us the history behind today's celebration.

3. *Prayers to St. Joseph for Workers:*

Joseph, by the work of your hands  
and the sweat of your brow,  
you supported Jesus and Mary,  
and had the Son of God as your fellow worker.

Teach me to work as you did,  
with patience and perseverance, for God and  
for those whom God has given me to support.  
Teach me to see in my fellow workers  
the Christ who desires to be in them,  
that I may always be charitable and forbearing  
towards all.

Grant me to look upon work  
with the eyes of faith,  
so that I shall recognize in it  
my share in God's own creative activity  
and in Christ's work of our redemption,  
and so take pride in it.

When it is pleasant and productive,  
remind me to give thanks to God for it.  
And when it is burdensome,  
teach me to offer it to God,  
in reparation for my sins  
and the sins of the world.

(Note: This prayer was taken from the booklet "Devotions to Saint Joseph" by Brian Moore, S.J., printed and published by the Society of St. Paul and listed on the following website: [www.stjosephshrine.org](http://www.stjosephshrine.org) )

***St. Joseph the Worker, Pray for Us!***

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## **Why is There a Feast for St Joseph the Worker?**

*Stressing the dignity of work, Pius XII put a peaceful spin on a day remembered for violent labor riots.*

On May 1, 1886, thousands of workers across the United States staged a major union strike and demonstration, calling for an eight-hour workday with the slogan, "Eight-hour day with no cut in pay." A few days later, still in the midst of the strike, laborers continued a protest in Chicago and met outside an industrial plant. While the protest was peaceful in nature, at the end of the workday a group of workers charged the strikebreakers and the police opened fire, killing two workers.

This prompted local anarchists to stage another rally on May 4, printing fliers that said, "Workingmen Arm Yourselves and Appear in Full Force!" The rally started out peacefully, but near the end of the night a homemade bomb was launched at a police officer. The police fired at the crowd in response and by the end of the night seven policemen were killed, along with four workers. Dozens were injured and the event became known as the Haymarket massacre.

The event fueled tensions at the time and by 1889 the International Socialist Conference declared May 1, "International Workers' Day," commemorating the massacre. Each year after that, May 1 was given more significance, being called "May Day" and a day used for labor protests. On May 1, 1894, there occurred another set of violent riots in Cleveland, Ohio, which again spurred the International Socialist Conference to work forcefully for worker's rights. From then on May 1 was continually used as a vehicle to promote worker's rights and became associated with the rising socialist movement across Europe.

Sixty years later in the midst of the Cold War, Pope Pius XII recognized the increasing tensions in the world and sought to counteract the violence by reclaiming the Christian dignity of work. He addressed the Christian Associations of Italian Workers in Saint Peter's Square on May 1, 1955, and urged them to not be deceived by the false voices of the world who claim that the Church is against laborers.

“How many times we have said and explained the love of the Church for the workers! Yet it is widely propagated the heinous slander that ‘the Church is an ally of capitalism against the workers!’ The Church, mother and teacher of all, is always very caring towards the children who are in the most difficult conditions, and also has made a valuable contribution to the achievement of honest progress already made by the various categories of workers.”

To make an even bolder statement against the rising worker movements, Pope Pius XII established a new feast day in the Church’s calendar, dedicating May 1 to “Saint Joseph the Worker.”

“[As] the Vicar of Christ, we wish to reaffirm highly, on this day of May 1 ... the dignity of work, and [to] inspire social life and laws, based on a fair share of rights and duties ... [We have determined to] establish the liturgical feast of St. Joseph the Worker, assigning it precisely on the 1st of May ... because the humble craftsman of Nazareth not only embodies the dignity of the arm of the worker ... he is also always the guardian of you and your families.”

By making it into a Catholic feast day, Pius XII reclaimed May 1 and gave it a Christian dimension. Christian workers were shown a model to imitate in Saint Joseph and a reminder of their dignity.

In the end, the Church has always taught that workers should be justly rewarded for their labor but begs workers to *go to Joseph* instead of trying to violently overthrow the social order to achieve their ends.

***Saint Joseph the Worker, pray for us!***

*Source: aleteia.org*