

International Worker's Day

Prayer for the month of May 2018

Introduction

 A graphic for International Worker's Day on May 1. It features a red background with the text "International Worker's Day" and "May 1" in white and yellow. Below the text is a stylized illustration of a worker's silhouette and a gear.	<p style="text-align: center;">We want the 8-hour work day, with wages undiminished</p> <hr/> <p>“If you desire to enjoy the pleasures of family and of living; If you wish somewhat more of well-being and of liberty; If, weary of long days of labour, you would have your yoke lightened, that you might instruct and educate yourself; If, finally, you desire to diminish the deadly employment to which you are all exposed, prepare to put into practice the eight-hour work day on May 1, 1906. Do not forget that one obtains only what one imposes”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Eight hours for work, Eight hours for rest, Eight hours for leisure</p> <p style="text-align: center;">From the French labour movement, 1906</p>
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The idea of celebrating work or workers began to emerge with the rise of the bourgeoisie, which unlike the nobility praised work (“his” work, initially) as a source of improvement in the world. For example, October 24, 1793, the revolutionary Fabre d’Eglantine instituted a Labor Day on the first day of Pluviose in his report on the French Republican Calendar. This calendar only lasted a few years.

The numerical reinforcement of the working class led to local initiatives, such as the Labor Day set up at the Familistere de Guise in 1867. In the United States, as early as 1882, some members of the Knights of Labor and the Central Labor Union campaigned for a Labor Day in early September.

But these were only local and often bourgeois initiatives. The international history of May Day dates back to the beginnings of workers’ unionism and in particular around the 8-hour day’s claim, with the slogan “8 hours of work, 8 hours of leisure, 8 hours of rest.” In the nineteenth century, it was common to work 10 or 12 hours every day except Sunday.



Pope Pius XII instituted in 1955 the feast of St. Joseph the Worker, celebrated on 1st of May, to Christianize this holiday for workers. This feast took up the initiative of Pope Leo XIII who in 1889 had made St. Joseph the “patron saint of fathers of families and workers” to give a pious model to the workers.

On May 1st, we celebrate this noble Patriarch St. Joseph as the “patron of workers”... a model for all workers!



In the World

Worker's Day is commemorated by a public holiday on May 1st in most countries that have instituted such a holiday.

Beginning of the prayer

If it is possible before starting the prayer, light candles for International Workers' Day. Additionally, if you want to put up pictures to help you to think about different categories of employees and workers, especially the oppressed, marginalized, poor sick, humiliated, excluded, uninsured, displaced, etc, here are some pictures to choose from:



After reading the text of the Gospel according to St. Matthew 20:1-13

***** Silent time for reflection**

***** Music of your choice to help you meditate upon and share the text of the Bible**

***** Hymns of your choice**

Gospel of Jesus Christ according to St. Matthew 20:1-13

The Workers in the Vineyard.

- 1 “The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out at dawn to hire laborers for his vineyard.**
- 2 After agreeing with them for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard.**
- 3 Going out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace,**
- 4 and he said to them, ‘You too go into my vineyard, and I will give you what is just.’**

- 5 So they went off. [And] he went out again around noon, and around three o'clock, and did likewise.
- 6 Going out about five o'clock, he found others standing around, and said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?'
- 7 They answered, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You too go into my vineyard.'
- 8 When it was evening the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Summon the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and ending with the first.'
- 9 When those who had started about five o'clock came, each received the usual daily wage.
- 10 So when the first came, they thought that they would receive more, but each of them also got the usual wage.
- 11 And on receiving it they grumbled against the landowner,
- 12 saying, 'These last ones worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us, who bore the day's burden and the heat.'
- 13 He said to one of them in reply, 'My friend, I am not cheating you. Did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage?'

Other Readings that can help:

Acts 20:35 "In every way I have shown you that by hard work of that sort we must help the weak, and keep in mind the words of the Lord Jesus who himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

Proverbs 20:13 Do not love sleep lest you be reduced to poverty; keep your eyes open, have your fill of food.

2 Thessalonians 3:7-9 You know how you should take us as your model: we were not undisciplined when we were with you, nor did we ever accept food from anyone without paying for it; no, we worked with unsparing energy, night and day, so as not to be a burden on any of you. This was not because we had no right to be, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to imitate.

Intercessory prayer:

O God Almighty, who took pity on the last worker at the last hour, have mercy on the workers who work so late at night and who are in danger.

R/ Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.

Lord Jesus, guide us through your Spirit of love and mercy, so that we can help our employees and together we glorify and praise you.

R/

Lord Jesus Risen, we entrust to you all workers, the workers all over the world, the educators, the teachers, our friends and our parents. Give them the feeling and the taste that all their works are for your greater glory.

R/

Let us ask St. Joseph to help us to help our family, our life, our missions, with all those we work with, to overcome difficulties and sorrows and especially to help those who work who are in poverty and who are marginalized

R/

Free Intercessions

Final Prayer

**Prayer to St. Joseph the Worker
written by Pope Pius XII (11 March 1958).**

O glorious Patriarch, Saint Joseph, humble and just artisan of Nazareth, you have given to all Christians and particularly to us an example of a perfect life through diligent labor and admirable union with Jesus and Mary. Assist us in our daily work in order that we, Catholic artisans, may also see in it an effective means of glorifying God, of sanctifying ourselves, and of being a useful member in the society in which we live. These should be the highest ideals for all our actions.

O dearest Protector, obtain for us from the Lord humility and simplicity of heart, love for our work and kindness towards our fellow-laborers; conformity to God's will in the unavoidable trials of this life together with joy in bearing them; recognition of our specific social mission and a sense of responsibility; the spirit and discipline of prayer; docility and respectfulness towards superiors; the spirit of kinship towards our equals; charity and indulgence with our dependents.

Accompany us in times of prosperity when the opportunity is given for an honest enjoyment of the fruits of our labors; sustain us in our hours of sadness, when Heaven seems to be shut in our regard, and even the very tools with which our hands toil appear to rebel against us.

Grant that, in imitation of you, we may keep our eyes fixed on our Mother, Mary, your dearest Spouse, who as she spun silently in a corner of your shop would let the sweetest smile course over her lips. Besides, may we never take our eyes off Jesus, Who was busily occupied with you at the carpenter's bench, in order that we in like manner may lead on earth a peaceful and a holy life, a prelude to the life of eternal happiness that awaits us in Heaven forever and ever. Amen.

**Prayer Contributed by Sr Jeannette Alfi
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