

Work Is Part of God's Plan

Following is the text of Pope John Paul II's Angelus message from Castlegandolfo on Sept. 20.

"The kingdom of heaven is like a householder who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard." (Mt 20:1)

These words begin the Gospel passage of today's liturgy. The well-known parable of the workers in the vineyard contains many themes. Fundamental among them is the thought that it is God who calls man to work, and that this must serve the continual formation of the world according to the plan of God himself. Every kind of human work, every one of its variations, is understood in the Gospel parable.



This parable, from its very beginning, contains man's calling to rediscover the meaning of his work, keeping in mind the salvific Plan of God.

What is human work?

We can give only a contracted answer to this question. It is above all a prerogative of man-person, an element of human completeness, which precisely helps man to be more man. Without work, he is unable not only to nourish himself, but also to fulfil himself,

or reach his true dimension. In the second place, and as a result, work is a necessity, a duty, that gives to the human being life, serenity, commitment, meaning. The Apostle Paul, we recall, severely warns: "If anyone will not work, let him not eat." Therefore each one is called to carry out an activity, at whatever level it may be, while idleness and exploitation are condemned.

Besides, work is a right, "it is the great and fundamental right of man," as I said two years ago in Poland in Nowy Targ. So much so that it must be promoted and safeguarded by society even in the possible conflict with other rights. Under these conditions, work becomes even a service, so that man "grows in the measure in which he gives himself for others." (to farmers of Legazpi City, Feb. 21) And from this harmony not only the individual, but also — and I would say above all — society itself benefits.

These are only some thoughts on the subject of the nature of human work. We put them together here, referring to the call of the householder who always goes out to hire laborers for his vineyard, as the Gospel parable says. We recall that this parable at its very beginning contains the invitation for man — whatever kind of work he performs — to rediscover his ultimate meaning in the salvific Plan of God. And we pray that the awareness of this meaning may grow and deepen in every man. In fact, according to the Plan of God, through work we must not only subdue the earth, but also achieve salvation. Therefore, there is connected with work not only the dimension of temporality, but also the dimension of eternity.

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