

### God is interested in all that interests us

You, who celebrate with me today this feast of St Joseph, are men who work in different human professions; you have your own homes, you belong to so many different countries and have different languages. You have been educated in lecture halls or in factories and offices. You have worked in your profession for years, established professional and personal friendships with your colleagues, helped to solve the problems of your companies and your communities.

Well then: I remind you once again that all this is not foreign to God's plan. Your human vocation is a part — and an important part — of your divine vocation. That is the reason why you must strive for holiness, giving a particular character to your human personality, a style to your life; contributing at the same time to the sanctification of others, your fellow men; sanctifying your work and your environment: the profession or job that fills your day, your home and family and the country where you were born and which you love.

### Prayer and work

Let us work. Let us work a lot and work well, without forgetting that prayer is our best weapon. That is why I will never tire of repeating that we have to be contemplative souls in the midst of the world, who try to convert their work into prayer.

### 'Professionalitis'

You really do need to make an effort and put your shoulder to the wheel. For all that, you should put your professional interests in their place: they are only means to an end; they can never be regarded — in any way — as if they were the basic thing. These attacks of 'professionalitis' stop you being united with God!

### Apostolate

You should behave as if it all depended on you: whether the atmosphere in your place of work is to be one of hard work, cheerfulness, presence of God and supernatural outlook.

Why are you so apathetic? If you come across a group at work who are a bit difficult, you lose interest in them. Perhaps they have become difficult because you have neglected them. Yet you throw in the towel and think of them as a dead weight which holds back your apostolic ideals because they do not understand you ...

You may love and serve them with your prayer and mortification, but how do you expect them to listen to you if you never speak to them?

You will have many surprises in store the day you decide to talk to them one by one. What is more, if you do not change, they will one day be able to point the finger at you and say quite rightly: *Hominem non habeo* — I have no one to help me.

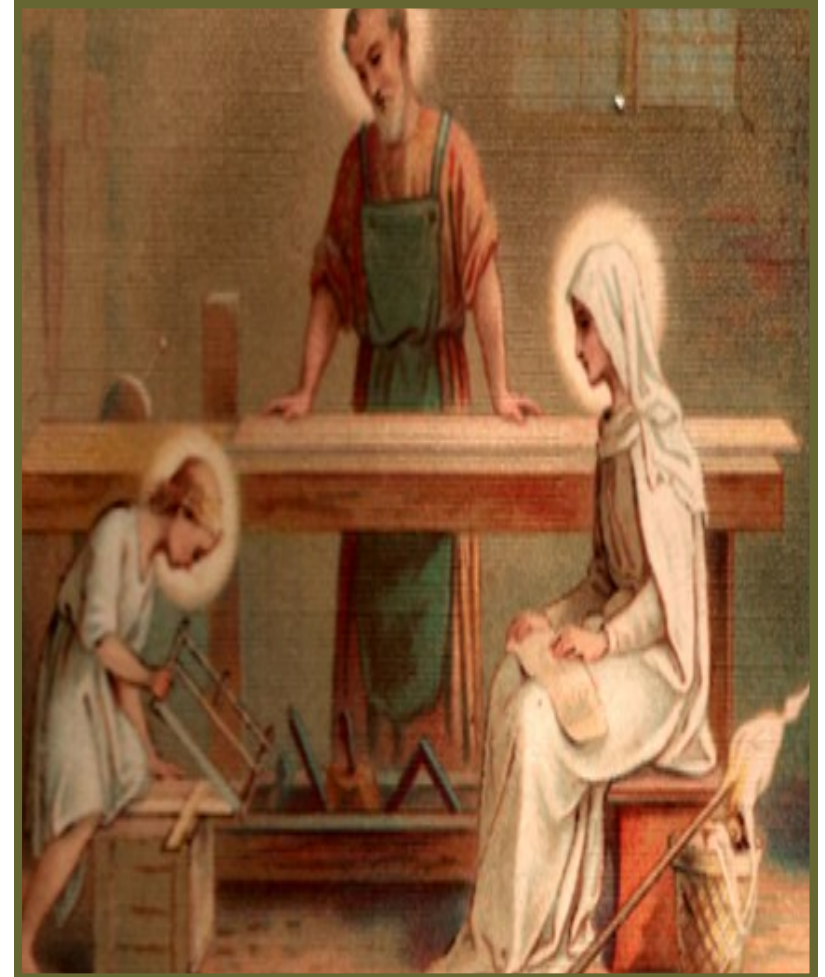
\*(excerpted from: [www.josemariaescriva.info](http://www.josemariaescriva.info))

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# SANCTIFICATION OF HUMAN LABOR

## PART I

SEPTEMBER 2



SAINT JOSEPH THE WORKER

## SANCTIFYING ORDINARY WORK

\*Sanctifying one's work is no fantastic dream, but the mission of every Christian — yours and mine. — That is what that lathe-worker had discovered, when he said: "I am overwhelmed with happiness when I think how true it is that while I am working at the lathe and singing — singing all the time, on the outside and on the inside — I can become a saint. How good God is!"

We have reminded Christians of the wonderful words of Genesis which tell us that God created man so that he might work, and we have concentrated on the example of Christ, who spent most of His life on earth working as a craftsman in a village. We love human work which He chose as His state in life, which He cultivated and sanctified. We see in work, in men's noble creative toil, not only one of the highest human values, an indispensable means to social progress and to greater justice in the relations between men, but also a sign of God's Love for His creatures, and of men's love for each other and for God: we see in work a means of perfection, a way to sanctity.

Hence, the sole objective of Opus Dei has always been to see to it that there be men and women of all races and social conditions who endeavor to love and to serve God and the rest of mankind in and through their ordinary work, in the midst of the realities and interests of the world.

### Dignity of every kind of work

Professional work, whatever it is, becomes a lamp to enlighten your colleagues and friends. That is why I usually tell those who become members of Opus Dei, and the same applies to all of you now listening to me: 'What use is it telling me that so and so is a good son of mine — a good Christian — but a bad shoemaker?' If he doesn't try to learn his trade well, or doesn't give his full attention to it, he won't be able to sanctify it or offer it to Our Lord. The sanctification of ordinary work is, as it were, the hinge of true spirituality for people who, like us, have decided to come close to God while being at the same time fully involved in temporal affairs.

### Equality of training and opportunities

All professional work demands previous training and a constant effort to improve one's formation and to adapt it to the new circumstances that may arise. And this is very specially true for those who aspire to occupy leading positions in society, because they are called to a very important service on which the entire community's well-being depends.

A woman with adequate training should find the field of public life open to her at all levels. In this sense it is impossible to point to specific tasks that correspond to women alone.

### Money and social responsibility

All men, all women — not only those who are poor in a material sense — have an obligation to work. Wealth and abundance of economic means only increase one's obligation to feel responsible for the whole of society.

### Work builds up society

The vast majority of the members of the Work are lay people, ordinary Christians. Their condition consists in having a profession or trade which is often absorbing and by means of which they earn their living, support their family, contribute to the common good, and develop their own personality. The vocation to Opus Dei confirms all this: to such an extent that one of the essential signs of this vocation is precisely a determination to remain in the world and to do a job as perfectly as possible (taking into account, of course, one's personal imperfections), both from the human and from the supernatural point of view. This means it must be a job which contributes effectively towards both the building up of the earthly city — and therefore it must be done competently and in a spirit of service; and to the consecration of the world — and in this regard it must both sanctify and be sanctified.

### Success and failure

But to return to our subject. I was saying just now that though you might achieve spectacular success in society, in public affairs, in your own careers, if you neglect your spiritual life and ignore Our Lord you will end up a complete failure.

You must be careful: don't let your professional success or failure — which will certainly come — make you forget, even for a moment, what the true aim of your work is: the glory of God!

### Work's real effectiveness comes from love

Having put them very much to the test, I am very fond of repeating these artless but very expressive verses: 'My life consists in loving, / And if with loving I'm familiar, / 'Tis because I've sorrowed much; / For there's no finer lover, / Than one who's suffered much.' Go about your professional duties for Love's sake. Do everything for the sake of Love and (precisely because you are in love, even though you may taste the bitterness of misunderstanding, of injustice, of ingratitude and even of failure in men's eyes) you will see the result in the wonders that your work produces — rich, abundant fruit, the promise of eternity!

### Work as mission

Our calling discloses to us the meaning of our existence. It means being convinced, through faith, of the reason for our life on earth. Our life, the present, past and future, acquires a new dimension, a depth we did not perceive before. All happenings and events now fall within their true perspective: we understand where God is leading us, and we feel ourselves borne along by this task entrusted to us.