

Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 31, 2025

Always be humble.

Jesus, the mediator.

Will be exalted.

-rvb

September 1 – Labor Day

More than a thousand years ago a Chinese Zen Master wrote: “Magical power, marvelous action! Chopping wood, carrying water.” This message is as true today as it was then, that is, we can find our spiritual search and desire in our everyday labors. St. Benedict reminds us – Laborare est orare = “To work is to pray.” Gerard Manley Hopkins speaks eloquently about Benedict’s comingling of labor and prayer: “It is not only prayer that gives God glory but work. Smiting on an anvil, sawing a beam, whitewashing a wall, driving horses, sweeping, scouring, everything gives God some glory if being in his grace you do it as your duty. To lift the hands in prayer gives God glory, but a man with a dung fork in his hand, a woman with a slop bucket, give him glory too.”

Work, like any other activity in our lives, can be a deeply enriching, meditative, and spiritual experience. It all depends on the attitude we bring to each moment as we labor. Approaching work with care and awareness can transform even the most mundane task into a deepening opportunity to reflect and grow. This attitude is reflected in most spiritual traditions.

Also, what is expected of the person(s) creating a work environment that nurtures the dignity of the one who labors day after day? Consider the following: 1. Practice compassion and empathy; 2. Strive to create a happy workplace; 3. Telling the truth and being transparent; 4. Do not focus on money; 5. Use common sense and simple solutions; 6. Care about your product; 7. Continue to articulate the values of the business; 8. Use effective and creative strategies; 9. Encourage personal and professional growth; and 10. Hire people you trust. -MiraBai Bush, founder of Illuminations.

For 60 years, as my labor, I have been blessed with the opportunity to facilitate learning primarily with high school and college students, in addition to and consulting

and facilitating workshops for businesses and companies for the Employee Resource Center. My work, my labor, my career, my calling, my vocation, and my ministry were an area of great passion, allowing me to spend my adult life serving the community. “A vision without a task is but a dream, a task without a vision is drudgery, a vision and a task are the hope of the world.” -From a Church in Sussex, England, circa 1730.

The following words from a former student at Northeast Technical College give evidence that we do not labor in vain, and often the seed never sees the flower.

“I wanted to write you a letter because I want you to know the impact you have had on my life. You are a special person who overflows with wisdom and compassion, and it shines through in your teachings. I look up to you Roger, not only because of your dedication to your students, but your ability to open yourself up to us. I have never reflected on myself so completely, and it is helping me make some important decisions in my life. I know sometimes teachers are not given their due credit, and I wanted to make sure you did. I am going to leave this letter anonymous, but I will be sending this letter to the school president to inform him how inspirational you were for me. I hope that many others will be blessed to have you as their teacher. Thank you, Roger, I will never forget you!

“It is in Jesus that we live, move, and have our being.” Acts 17:28.

Roger J. Vanden Busch