

May 1, 2024 - Feast of S. Joseph the Worker

H O M I L Y

To the people of his own village, Jesus was known as the Carpenter's son. And one day, when he was accused by the Doctors of the Law of breaking the Sabbath's rules by performing miracles on that day, he answered that his heavenly Father worked all the time and so did he.

In the first reading, we had the beautiful, poetic description of God's work of creation, culminating in the creation of man and woman, after God's own image.

We have been created at the image of God; participating, through grace, in the divine nature, we also participate in his constant creative activity. Creation is not something that happened once for all a few billion years ago. God is always in the act of creating the world. And this is the foundation for the great dignity of human work -- of any form of human work.

One of the best expressions of communion between two persons consists in doing something together -- creating something together. When we work, we participate in God's creative activity; we create the world with Him. And for that reason work as such has in itself a very contemplative dimension. It would be a very pernicious error to think that we are contemplative only when we do not work. On the contrary, work done in the awareness of God's presence and of God's activity has an authentic and important contemplative dimension.

This implies a tremendous responsibility. We are responsible, with God, for the whole created world. The text of Genesis, well translated and well understood, is the best theological foundation for the ecological awareness that has become an imperative for the very continuation of our planet. The choice of words in a translation is always influenced by the mentality of the time. Most of the translations of the book of Genesis say that God has given man the order to dominate the whole cosmos. And so have we understood in the past, dominating, using and abusing the whole created world... with some catastrophic consequences. But it is not really what the text says. What the text says is that human beings are called to exercise *lordship* over the cosmos, but in the same way as God does: a *lordship* of love and care. A *lordship* that is nurturing and not destructive.

Let us treat the whole created world, through our work, in such a way that we may really be able to say in all truth, at the end of each one of our actions, as God did: "It is good, very good."