

Pope John Paul II's Gospel of Work With Introduction and Commentary

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Published in New London, CT by Twenty Third Publications
Available through <http://www.twentythirdpublications.com>

Basic Premises

Pope John Paul II had a vision of work as the fundamental dimension of life on earth. It offers the means for people to become mature spiritually.

To work is to participate in God's creation and in that participation we become more human.

Work has a personal and a community dimension. Employers and employees have to work collaboratively to enable all dimensions of work to be fulfilled.

“By enduring the toil of work in union with Christ crucified for us, we in a way collaborate with the Son of God for the redemption of humanity” (p. 100).

Pattern of the Book

The first third of the book contains short selections from writings and homilies given by Pope John Paul II over the course of his pontificate. This section is easy to read and fairly straightforward in thought and expression.

The last two-thirds contains the text of his encyclical *On Human Work* interspersed with commentary and reflection questions. This section is more challenging to read as it contains the very precise, logical reasoning that underlies the more readily understood first readings of the book. The encyclical provides insight into the foundations and line of reasoning Pope John Paul II used in developing and preaching the Gospel of Work.

The book moves one from a consideration of the personal meaning and dimensions of work to, at the end, a consideration of how parishes and parish liturgies can or should be supportive of the conceptualization of work presented in this book.

Best Use

The book is best used in small group discussions. It has frequent reflection prompts and questions that should readily lead to in depth discussions about the nature and value of work as envisioned by Pope John Paul II.

Another Resource

Some additional information and reflection about work and the encyclical can be found at [A Catholic Vision of Work](#) on the Living Faith at Work Website.