

1. Read (Seek) — Read the verses slowly and prayerfully several times. Write down any words or phrases that seem to stand out:

2. Meditate (Find) — Now begin to reflect on the verses and ask God what it means and how he wants to speak to you through the passage.
God what are you saying to me through this?

3. Pray (Ask) — Respond from your heart to what God has been saying to you. **What do you want me to know?** Write down your prayer to him or record whatever he says to you.

4. Contemplate (Taste) — Be quiet before the Lord enjoying His presence. **How is God calling you to act in response to what he has shown you?**

[1] In Conversation with God pgs. 483-488

[2] Second Vatican Council, Gaudium et spes, 43

[3] Encyclicals of John Paul II pg. 172

[4] John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, 39

[5] John 4:36

[6] Laborem Exercens

[7] John 4:34 [8] 1 Corinthians 3:9

[9] 1 Corinthians 11:1-2 [10] Sirach 33:27

[11] Excerpt from Laborem Exercens – Pope John Paul II (Work and Personal Dignity)

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What is the Gospel saying? Luke 21:5-19 — Pg. 1

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What is God saying to you through this passage? Page 4

Gospel Reading – Luke 21:5-19 – Roman Missal

While some people were speaking about how the temple was adorned with costly stones and votive offerings, Jesus said, "All that you see here --the days will come when there will not be left a stone upon another stone that will not be thrown down." Then they asked him, "Teacher, when will this happen? And what sign will there be when all these things are about to happen?" He answered, "See that you not be deceived, for many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he,' and 'The time has come.' Do not follow them! When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; for such things must happen first, but it will not immediately be the end." Then he said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be powerful earthquakes, famines, and plagues from place to place; and awesome sights and mighty signs will come from the sky. "Before all this happens, however, they will seize and persecute you, they will hand you over to the synagogues and to prisons, and they will have you led before kings and governors because of my name. It will lead to your giving testimony. Remember, you are not to prepare your defense beforehand, for I myself shall give you a wisdom in speaking that all your adversaries will be powerless to resist or refute. You will even be handed over by parents, brothers, relatives, and friends, and they will put some of you to death. You will be hated by all because of my name, but not a hair on your head will be destroyed. By your perseverance you will secure your lives."

Spiritual Reading - From St. Paul to the Thessalonians:

Brothers and sisters: You know how one must imitate us. For we did not act in a disorderly way among you, nor did we eat food received free from anyone. On the contrary, in toil and drudgery, night and day we worked, so as not to burden any of you. Not that we do not have the right. Rather, we wanted to present ourselves as a model for you, so that you might imitate us. In fact, when we were with you, we instructed you that if anyone was unwilling to work, neither should that one eat. We hear that some are conducting themselves among you in a disorderly way, by not keeping busy but minding the business of others. Such people we instruct and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to work quietly and to eat their own food.

Work - Lesson and Discussion[1]

"night and day we worked, so as not to burden any of you"

Today's gospel might make people feel like the world will come to an end tomorrow! Many of the early Christians thought so. St. Paul preached

about it over and over, as did St. Peter. Many of the Christians got so worked up by the possible second coming that they disregarded any kind of work, both big and small. This has continued even today. Many people feel that Jesus could come at any minute. While it is true that He could come at any point in time, that doesn't mean we should stop doing what we are called to do. The Second Vatican Council plainly states this thought: "For they are forgetting that by the faith itself they are more obliged than ever to measure up to these duties, each according to his proper vocation." [2]

Why do we have to work? Pope Saint John Paul II says in his encyclical *Laborem Exercens*, that by working, we are living out God's will to "have dominion over the world" [3] In an age of computers and machines doing the "work", it is us humans that have to work to make these programs and machines. In other words, we still have to work to make things work for us. Our life is a work to accomplish – the work of God. In his encyclical *Centesimus Annus*, Pope John Paul II that we can begin to see our lives as "a series of sensations to be experienced rather than as a work to be accomplished." [4]

How is work good for us? How is it good for us spiritually? St. Jose Maria Escriva said that work is not a consequence of sin, but a law from God that binds us all together. "It is meant to fill our days and make us share in God's creative power." It allows us to earn a living and "at the same time, to reap 'the fruits of eternal life.'" [5] "The Church is convinced that work is a fundamental dimension of man's existence on earth." [6] There is a dignity in work. The Word became flesh, God became man, and as a man Jesus worked. He was a carpenter and was faithful to His temporal duties. The work of Jesus goes far beyond the temporal. Jesus says, "My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish his work." [7] As followers of Christ, the Christian should long to not only do well in temporal work, but to unite with the work of Christ, which is the will of the Father. Saint Paul tells us that we are God's co-workers. "The one plants and the one who waters are equal, and each will receive wages in proportion to his labor. For we are God's co-workers; you are God's field, God's building." [8]

Why does God need co-workers? God does not need co-workers. God does not need anything. If a mother is baking a cake, she does not need help baking a cake, but she might ask or allow her daughter to help her. **Why does she ask her daughter to help, when she does not need the help?** The mother desires to share her good work with her daughter. In this sharing the daughter grows in relationship with her mother. The two become one in the work, in the experience. Her daughter also shares in the fruit of the work; she sees the joy as people enjoy the cake. The daughter also learns how to do the work of her mother, and thus once learning she can pass this work on to others. Saint Paul did the work of God, he was a co-worker, and thus he could share this work with others. This is why Saint Paul said, "be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold fast to the traditions, just as I handed them on to you." [9]

What virtues do we gain from work? Work is an ordinary means for the development of virtues. The human virtues of manliness (and womanhood), constancy, tenacity, the spirit of solidarity, order, and optimism in the face of adversity are just a few of the virtues we gain from our work.

If we do not work, how is this harmful to us? To not work can lead us to grave sins. The deadly sin of sloth or laziness can bring about bad consequences. As it says in the book of Sirach, "idleness teaches much evil" [10] When we don't work, we can become idle which can lead to many temptations and sins. We should not fall into procrastination and put off the work that must be done today. When we put off what must be done, we can become more complacent, lazy, scared, or nervous about the work that we are not doing. This can leave the burden on others or later give us more work than before.

"God's fundamental and original intention with regard to man, whom he created in his image and after his likeness, was not withdrawn or cancelled out even when man, having broken the original covenant with God, heard the words: 'In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread'. These words refer to the sometimes heavy toil that from then onwards has accompanied human work; but they do not alter the fact that work is the means whereby man achieves that 'dominion' which is proper to him over the visible world, by 'subjecting' the earth. Toil is something that is universally known, for it is universally experienced. It is familiar to those doing physical work under sometimes exceptionally laborious conditions. It is familiar not only to agricultural workers, who spend long days working the land, which sometimes 'bears thorns and thistles', but also to those who work in mines and quarries, to steel-workers at their blast-furnaces, to those who work in builders' yards and in construction work, often in danger of injury or death. It is likewise familiar to those at an intellectual workbench; to scientists; to those who bear the burden of grave responsibility for decisions that will have a vast impact on society. It is familiar to doctors and nurses, who spend days and nights at their patients' bedside. It is familiar to women, who, sometimes without proper recognition on the part of society and even of their own families, bear the daily burden and responsibility for their homes and the upbringing of their children. It is familiar to all workers and, since work is a universal calling, it is familiar to everyone. And yet, in spite of all this toil-perhaps, in a sense, because of it-work is a good thing for man. Even though it bears the mark of a bonum arduum, in the terminology of Saint Thomas, this does not take away the fact that, as such, it is a good thing for man. It is not only good in the sense that it is useful or something to enjoy; it is also good as being something worthy, that is to say, something that corresponds to man's dignity that expresses this dignity and increases it. If one wishes to define more clearly the ethical meaning of work, it is this truth that one must particularly keep in mind. Work is a good thing for man-a good thing for his humanity-because through work man not only transforms nature, adapting it to his own needs, but he also achieves fulfillment as a human being and indeed, in a sense, becomes 'more a human being.'" [11]