

May Blessing of All Who Work the Land

We share in God's work through our human labor. Work is not drudgery that our Creator has imposed on us nor is it a penance for our sinfulness. Work is a gift: human participation in the creative activity of God.

In Church tradition, we have a beautiful partnership of work by the married farm couple, Isidore and Maria. These saints labored with their hands, cared for the land and its creatures, and brought a blessing to the poor of their day and the church for all time.

All who have a part in helping bring food to the table are a precious treasure in the human community and especially in the Church. Their country lifestyle and the spirituality that flows from it is a witness to Biblical faith.

Work is our communion with God and is also our communion with people, our way of taking responsibility for the wellbeing of our neighbors, communities and the environment.

Blessing: God blesses our work, the work of human hands, to make the land fruitful and to provide food for us. Let us ask God to mark our hands and our labors with a blessing this day.

Blessed are you, Lord God, for through your goodness this oil is the fruit of the earth and the work of human hands. By your mighty love, it carries your blessing to us and to all that we do. Let it be a blessing to us and to all that we do. Let it be a blessing to all who labor with their hands and to all who work with the land.

A Prayer to Saint Isidore, Patron of Country People

(St. Isidore, patron saint of farmers, was himself a farm born in the city of Madrid, Spain, about the year 1110; His chief appeal is to those who, as he did, work the land. But his good qualities—whole-hearted trust in God, his enthusiasm and vigor in doing his job, his spirit of prayer and devotion to religious practice—these can profitably be admired and imitated by all laboring men, just as his wife Maria, can serve as a model for working men's wives. His feast day is celebrated throughout the United States on May 15.)

GOOD Saint, we are told that your devotion to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was so great that you would rise before it was light in order to be able to attend Mass before beginning your work in the fields. Obtain for us, we pray you, some of that loving devotion to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. There it is that the fruits of our farm labor, bread and wine, are brought and offered to God by the priest. Then, in the consecration, Christ Himself, Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, becomes present on our altars under the appearances of this same bread and wine. And in what was the altar bread. He comes to us to be the very food of our souls. If we deeply realize the value and beauty of Holy Mass, we will be very happy to attend as often as we possibly can.

Help us to understand that in the Mass we offer ourselves to God with Christ by the hands of the priest. There we can bring to God all that we do, and offer it to Him in union with His Holy Sacrifice. The oftener we do this now, the happier we shall be hereafter. Good Saint Isidore, bless us and our labors, that we may someday reap the reward of good works with you in heaven. Amen.