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Letter from the Prelate (10 October 2024)

The Prelate of Opus Dei invites us to reflect on what it means to sanctify one's work and on some of its specific manifestations in daily life.

10/10/2024

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My dear children: may Jesus watch over my daughters and sons for me!

We have so frequently, even constantly, felt our heart stirred by the need to pray a lot. There is so much we need to turn to God's mercy for: from matters related to our own personal life to the great problems that menace the world. At the same time, we also realize the importance of giving thanks to God because of many positive aspects. In one way or another, everything is a reason for prayer; indeed, everything can be prayer.

Therefore we can consider here the need to turn work into prayer, with the certainty that "since Christ took it into his hands, work has become for us a redeemed and redemptive reality. Not only is it the background of mankind's life; it is a means and path to holiness. It is something to be sanctified and something that sanctifies" (*Christ is Passing By*, no. 47).

To sanctify work is to make holy the human activity of working, which has as immediate consequences (rather they are aspects of the same reality) the furthering of the sanctification of the person working and the sanctification of others through the Communion of Saints, and also the sanctification of the structures of human society.

It may seem complicated, but in reality it is very simple – a simplicity that does not mean it is easy: “Add a supernatural motive to your ordinary work and you will have sanctified it” (*The Way*, no. 359). This motive that sanctifies work is not a simple pious aspect independent of the work itself. Rather it is a question of *why* and *for what* one is working, as a conscious final goal that decisively influences both the carrying out of the work and its material and formal result. Hence “an essential part of the endeavor –

the sanctification of ordinary work – that God has entrusted to us is to carry out as well as possible the work itself, also with human perfection, fulfilling very well all of one’s professional and social obligations” (*Letter 24*, no. 18).

The supernatural motive at the root of the sanctification of work is love: “It is well to remember that the dignity of work is based on Love. A person’s great privilege is to be able to love and to transcend what is fleeting and ephemeral. We can love other creatures, pronounce an ‘I’ and a ‘you’ which are full of meaning. And we can love God, who opens heaven’s gates to us, makes us members of his family and allows us also to talk to him in friendship, face to face. This is why mankind shouldn’t limit itself to material production. Work is born of love; it is a manifestation of love and is

directed toward love” (*Christ is Passing By*, no. 48).

It is comforting to know that work is holy and sanctifies when it is guided by and imbued with love for God and other men and women. This is the essence of the *supernatural motive* that is sufficient to sanctify work; and we understand even better why this *motive* tends in itself to further the human perfection of work.

It is not only a question of working for God, but at the same time and necessarily it is the *work of God*. He is the one who loves first and, through the Holy Spirit, makes our love possible.

Let us continue to pray for the Second Session of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, which began on the 2nd of this month and will conclude on the 27th – which is also my birthday. I am relying greatly on your prayers.

Naturally, please keep very much in mind the work of adapting the Statutes of the Prelature. In principle, the next meeting of experts will be at the beginning of November.

Your Father blesses you with all his affection.

Rome, 10 October 2024

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