

Labor Day, 2021 – The Blessing of Human Labor

September 6, 2021

Reflection by Sister Judith Murphy, OSB

Col 1:24–2:3; Lk 6:6-11

And God said: Let us make humans in our image—after our likeness. Let them take care of all living things and the earth that is their common home.

God as loving Creator made humans and the whole human project in the divine image and likeness. As God is love, so we are called by our Creator to be loving. As God is known in creating so we too come to be who we are by the work we are called to, the work we do. Today we ask blessing on our human labor; and acknowledge that our work is a blessing for us, too.

We bring ourselves and the work of our hands to this table to be joined with Christ in *this sacrament* of praise. The hymn today is especially beautiful in its description of human work. God who gives us our days as well as all the realities of our world, the realities of our species, the realities of our hearts and minds and spirits invites us to be co-creators. Often it is in and through the work we do that we come to understand our identity. And we grow into ourselves over the course of our lifetime, in heart and mind and spirit—evolution taking place in each of us; as well as evolution that happens in our species.

I think sometimes about how God can be praised in all the activities of humans and humanity, in the doing of the work itself; in all the ways that humans seek to understand and be understood, in the words we use in trying to communicate and how we work to hear the Word of God, especially in Jesus Christ, the Word made Flesh...but also in each other and in the varied persons that share our world, however near or far.

Our vow of *Conversion through a Monastic Way of Life* is aspirational; we aspire to be converted by accepting one other, by together being part of Christ's offering to the Father for our world. Heady stuff... The values that we live by are unenforceable, and they are the responsibility of each of us. With all our variety, we are called to live in mutual charity... this can and may mean conversion for us through our monastic way of life.

In today's gospel selection we hear, Seek first the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness. We come full circle with the reminder that our worship celebrates God's law of love written in our hearts---the law of love that we seek to live out with one another.

Pope Francis in *Fratelli Tutti* exhorts us to recognize our kinship with all of humanity, beginning with family and community and... aspiring in hope to learn to recognize our relatedness with *all of humanity* ... to recognize the fundamentals of kinship with all of humanity as we gradually widen the circle of our concerns. (And Francis calls us as church to be a kind of field hospital for our suffering world.)

This year in our assignments we are all again asked to continue our prayers for all of humanity... for all the people and issues at the intersection of climate change, human

migration, and racism, and we pray to be open to the ways these realities call us to conversion—even as we watch the 24 hour news cycle day by day.

Today we also ask our loving God to bless the work of our hands// and to continue to create us in the course of our lives ...to grow toward God's idea for us.