

"Laborers in the vineyard"

www.graceinaction.org
September 2008

GRACE IN Action

LIVING CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP™

celebrate
September

- 8 Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- 14 Holy Cross
- 15 Our Lady of Sorrows
- 29 Sts. Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, archangels



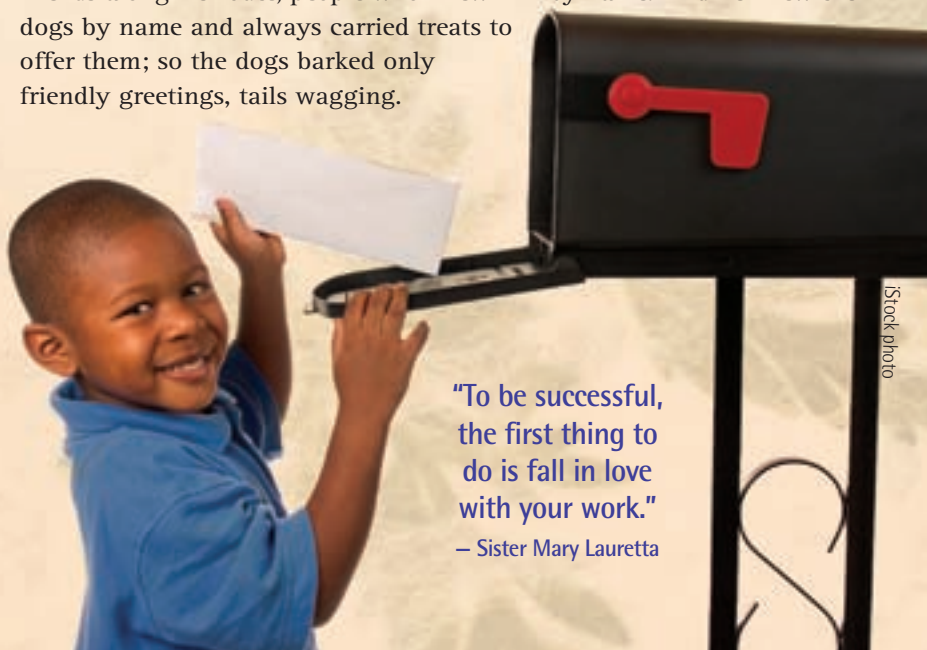
James Baca photo

new parable "May the day never burden"



here were two mail carriers. One begrudged the rain, snow, sleet and hail – as well as the temperatures: too hot in summer, too cold in winter. He griped about carrying his heavy bag packed with catalogs and periodicals. This mailman cursed the dogs on his route, and the dogs snarled at him and bared their teeth. He grouched about the steps he had to climb, the people who didn't shovel in winter or left sprinklers on in summer and how much junk mail he delivered. This mail carrier saw his job as a necessary evil, a means to an end, and he looked forward only to his days off.

The other mail carrier was grateful to be outdoors enjoying the fragrant blossoming trees in spring, flower gardens in summer and colorful leaves in autumn. He even appreciated the beauty of snow and icicles in winter. This mail carrier was thankful that he was able-bodied enough to walk each day, happy to integrate exercise into his work. He delighted in delivering pay-checks and postcards, birthday cards, Christmas cards and Valentines. He knew his customers would be pleased to find their favorite magazines in their mailbox and packages on their porch. The mail carrier had many friends along his route, people who knew him by name. And he knew their dogs by name and always carried treats to offer them; so the dogs barked only friendly greetings, tails wagging.



Stock photo

"To be successful,
the first thing to
do is fall in love
with your work."

– Sister Mary Laurretta

the way we pray Irish Blessing for Workers

May the light of your soul guide you. May the light of your soul bless the work you do with the secret love and warmth of your heart. May you see in what you do the beauty of your own soul. May the sacredness of your work bring healing, light and renewal to those who work with you and to those who see and receive your work. May your work never weary you. May it release within you wellsprings of refreshment, inspiration and excitement. May you be present in what you do. May you never become lost in bland absences. May the day never burden. May dawn find you awake and alert, approaching your new day with dreams, possibilities and promises. May evening find you gracious and fulfilled. May you go into the night blessed, sheltered and protected. May your soul calm, console and renew you.

– John O'Donohue, writer and poet

kids corner How will you serve?

God gives each one of us gifts and talents. When we use our gifts and talents, we feel joy. As we grow, we develop our gifts and talents and put them to work in the world. What are your gifts and talents? How can you share your gifts and talents with your family? Your parish? Your school? Your neighborhood?

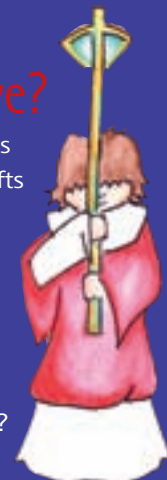


Illustration by Quincy Benton





try this Ignatian workbook

Got on-the-job issues? Who doesn't? Try this: "Take Five: On-the-Job Meditations with St. Ignatius," by Mike Aquilina and Father Kris D. Stubna.

Minimeditations in this pocket-sized book address common workplace dilemmas involving gossip, procrastination, fair wages, to name but a few. The book's format helps integrate Ignatian teachings. To order, see the link at www.graceinaction.org or call 800-348-2440.

sowing seeds Job? Career? Or calling?

"In the sense of a 'job,' work is a way of making money and making a living. It supports a self defined by economic success, security and all that money can buy. In the sense of a 'career,' work traces one's progress through life by achievement and advancement in an occupation. It yields a self defined by a broader sort of success, which takes in social standing and prestige, and by a sense of expanding power and competency that renders work itself a source of self-esteem. In the strongest sense of a 'calling,' work constitutes a practical idea of activity and character that makes a person's work morally inseparable from his or her life. It subsumes the self into a community of disciplined practice and sound judgment whose activity has meaning and value in itself not just in the output or profit that results from it. But the calling not only links a person to his or her fellow workers, a calling links a person to the larger community, a whole in which the calling of each is a contribution to the good of all."



James Bace photo

— Robert Bellah as quoted in "Stewardship: A Disciple's Response"
U.S. Catholic bishops' pastoral letter on stewardship

**Do you work at a job, a career or a calling?
How might you make your job or career evolve into a calling?**

To learn more about the Church's views on work, read *Rerum Novarum*, the Latin title that translates "On the Condition of Labour." An encyclical issued in 1891 by Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum* established the base of Catholic social-justice teaching. Log on to www.graceinaction.org and see our link to the encyclical.

modern disciple Dorothy Day: "WORK IS THE ANSWER!"

Dorothy Day was one of the most influential laypeople in the history of American Catholicism. Marquette University Press recently published "The Duty of Delight: The Diaries of Dorothy Day" to coincide with the 75th anniversary of the Catholic Worker newspaper Day co-founded and edited.

Robert Ellsworth, who knew Day during the last five years of her life, edited her diaries, which she began in 1934. The thick book documents Day's everyday life, her radical social stances and her traditional

piety. A convert to Catholicism, Day regularly rose at dawn to attend daily Mass. "Without the sacraments of the Church," she wrote, "I certainly do not think that I could go on." Day said the Rosary, read voraciously — including the Breviary — and saw herself as a "loyal daughter of the Church." She was also a pacifist, and she carried out many acts of civil disobedience.

Inspired by her favorite saint, Thérèse of Lisieux, Day was convinced that ordinary life provided an arena for holiness. Day gave a good measure of her life to serve people she

recognized as "insulted and injured." One journal entry indicates she wanted to do even more: "What I want to do is get a job, in some hospital as ward maid, get a room, preferably next door to a church; and there in the solitude of the city, living and working with the poor; to learn to pray, to work, to suffer, to be silent."

The Vatican formally opened Day's cause for canon-



ization in 2000, and bestowed upon her the title "Servant of God." Causes for sainthood must include an individual's capacity for joy, which, in the case of Day should present

no roadblock.

In one diary entry Day wrote: "If I concern myself with my own sins and lament them, if I remember my own failures and lapses, I will not be resentful of others. . . . It makes one unhappy to judge people and happy to love them."

