

Father O'Connor's Homily for 16 November 2025
33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time [C]

Malachi 3: 19-20a
2 Thessalonians 3: 7-12
Luke 21: 5-19

A company president was addressing her employees. "I know that you've all heard that we're going to be automated. And you're worried that these robots will take over your jobs. Well, I'm happy to tell you that no one will be laid off. But you will only be required to come to work on Wednesdays, and you will all still receive your full pay."

Then a voice in the back of the room piped up and asked, "Do you mean every Wednesday?"

Saint Paul, in today's second reading, gets after the Thessalonians who were unwilling to do their share of the work. There were some who thought that Jesus' second coming at the end of the world – which is the subject of today's Gospel – was going to happen very soon. "So why bother with work? Let's just sit back and enjoy ourselves!"

But Paul tells them, "We don't know when Jesus is coming again. It may be today. It may be thousands of years from now. So get busy and do your share of the work every day." And then he adds, "If anyone is unwilling to work, neither should that one eat."

Work is a vital part of our living – whether it is for pay or as a volunteer, whether at home with housework or being a "prayer warrior." Our work contributes to our satisfaction with life.

Somebody put it this way: "Find a job that you really love and you will never work another day in your life." And there is truth to this. It is a real blessing when we like the work that we do.

Someone asked a longtime professional baseball player how he maintained his enthusiasm for the game. He answered, "Have you ever heard an umpire start a game by saying, 'Work ball'? Of course not. They always say, 'Play ball.' And that's exactly what I do."

In plain words, his advice comes down to: "Take your job and love it."

For many of us, our work is linked to our self-esteem.

There is a story about a wealthy man in Mexico who was in the habit of buying two tangerines every morning from a woman who operated a stand near his

home. One morning he told her that he wanted to buy her entire stock of tangerines for a party that he was having that evening. Much to his surprise, she refused to sell him any more than his usual two tangerines. “Why not?” he asked her. She replied with great dignity, “If I sold you all of my tangerines this morning, what would I do for the rest of the day?” She put a lot of value in her relationships with her clients.

Our work is linked to our self-esteem and our satisfaction with life.

Work is also good therapy for the person in distress. Psychologists tell us that part of the progress in dealing with grief is resuming the daily routines of life. Those who shut themselves off from responsibilities and relationships will not make a lot of progress in the grieving process.

Work is vital to our lives beyond the financial compensation that it affords. There is a spiritual purpose for work as well. Work allows us to be partners with God in fulfilling the needs of the world.

In the story of creation in the Book of Genesis, God Himself worked for six days and He rested on the seventh.

Many people think of work as a punishment for the sin of Adam and Eve. However, when we look at the Genesis story carefully, it shows us that from the beginning it was God’s intention that Adam and Eve should work, tending the Garden of Eden. It was their attitude toward work that changed after their fall from grace, experiencing work now as drudgery.

A visitor to a coal mine stopped to talk with one of the miners. He told the miner how sorry he was that he had to spend his time monotonously loading coal down in those dark tunnels. The miner picked up a piece of coal and said, “I don’t think you understand. This is not just a lump of coal. This is light and heat and power. Perhaps it will light a city, or heat a home, or fuel a train. I’m not just a miner for the coal company. I’m helping people I don’t even know to have a better way of life.”

Work allows us to be partners with God in fulfilling the needs of the world.

And if we are working in partnership with God, doesn’t it follow that we should strive for excellence?

There is an old Hebrew saying that “God is more delighted with adverbs than He is with nouns.” That is, it matters to God not so much what is done, as how it is done and how well.

God did not create the heavens and the earth and say, “Well, that’s good enough.” Rather, we read, “God looked at everything that He had made and He found it very good” [Genesis 1: 31]. And doing our best work pleases God.

Many years ago, the London **Times** newspaper had problems with their employees who were typesetters. Too many mistakes were being made. Finally the newspaper editors came up with a solution. They gathered all the workers and announced that, from now on, the first copy of every edition would be sent to Buckingham Palace for the royal family to read.

You and I need to have that attitude towards our life's work. That the King of Kings looks for our fine work and notices it. "Well done, good and faithful servant" [Matthew 25: 23].

Work is linked not only to our financial well-being but also to our feelings of satisfaction with life, our sense of self-esteem, and as therapy in times of distress. Our work allows us to be partners with God in fulfilling the needs of the world. And it is important that we do our very best, whatever our task may be.

We seek that divine "Well done, good and faithful servant" not because we need to earn God's favor, but because God has honored us so highly by giving us a part to play in His kingdom.

And we can embrace Paul's advice when he says, "You must never grow weary of doing what is right, brothers and sisters" [2 Thessalonians 3: 13].

Or in plain language: "Take your job and love it."