

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Tomorrow our nation will celebrate Labor Day, a traditional day which marks the end of summer and the return to school for many families. This is the “last hurrah”, in a sense, of leisure and relaxation before hitting the books and getting back into the routine of academia. This is also a day to honor the women and men who toil so much in order for us to enjoy the fruits of their labor. Ours is a living standard which is the envy of most of the world. When we go to the market we are able to access fresh vegetables and fruit; we can pick top-quality meat and dairy products; we have spread so grandly before us a wide variety of goods. So often I take these blessings for granted: bountiful choices and ready access to commerce and goods. Labor Day is an opportunity for us to stop and reflect—and indeed to give thanks—to those countless workers who’s often tiring and unsung work makes our lives so much easier and fulfilling. It is a time to acknowledge the tireless efforts of those who have championed—often against tremendous obstacles and violence—dignified and safe workspaces and a just wage for working men and women.

On September 14, 1981, on the Feast of the Triumph of the Cross, Saint Pope John Paul II promulgated his encyclical *Laborem Exercens*. This encyclical commemorated the ninetieth anniversary of the publication of *Rerum Novarum*, written by Pope Leo XIII and one of the most significant Church documents on the social question. Saint Pope John Paul II wrote: “Awareness that man’s work is a participation in God’s activity ought to permeate, as the Council teaches, even *‘the most ordinary everyday activities*. For, while providing the substance of life for themselves and their families, men and women are performing their activities in a way which appropriately benefits society. They can justly consider that by their labour they are unfolding the Creator’s work, consulting the advantages of their brothers and sisters, and contributing by their personal industry to the realization in history of the divine plan.” Thus, work is a sign of a person’s dignity and should be viewed as a thanksgiving or contribution for all of God’s abundant blessings to us. No work is too small and no worker too insignificant to not warrant our respect and thanks. In a particular way, I am grateful to the entire staff of Saint Pius whose generosity and commitment to hard work is a signal example to me. They inspire me to give my all, go the extra mile, to be the MAGIS!

One of the great pleasures of being a priest is accompanying young couples as they prepare for the Sacrament of Marriage. This summer we celebrated the marriages of three alumni of Saint Pius School: Daniel Engels (Hilary Rose Williams); Alissa Fraone (Scott James Mueschen) and Augustine Chomorro (Dana Janae Campbell). Let us pray for them and wish them every grace and blessing as they begin this new chapter and milestone in their lives. “May God, the source of all patience and encouragement, ennoble you to live in perfect harmony with one another according to the Spirit of Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and voice you may glorify God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another then, as Christ accepted you, for the glory of God.” (Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans).

Fr. Tom