



## Your work is awesome!

A reflection from the readings of  
Feast of St. Joseph the Worker

Colossians 3:14-15, 17, 23-24  
Matthew 13:54-58

"Isn't he just the carpenter's son?" That's what people said about Jesus when he visited his home town, in Matthew 13:54-58. Never mind the awesome miracles he had done a short time before this scene took place.

Have you ever been devalued because you were "just" something? Just a secretary or just a worker in the lower echelons of the company or just a stay-at-home mom, just a young person, just an old man, just a woman, just a lay person, just a teenager, just a dreamer, just a sick person, just a stranger on the other end of a phone line?

The thing is, the more surprising you are as that "just-a" person, the less accepted you are by those who expect less, because you're challenging (however inadvertently) their limited perceptions. And when people repeatedly reject your abilities, it's a sure sign that you've triggered their insecurities. They cope by trying to imagine that you are smaller than you are, to make you seem familiar and safe to them. They are trying to make sense out of you by defining you in terms of their own personal shortcomings.

Never accept these "just-a" definitions of who you really are. Instead, turn to Jesus, because he knows from personal experience how you feel when you're wrongly labeled. Ask him to show you what *he* thinks of you. God cherishes your abilities and knows you better than everyone else, better even than you know yourself. You are no "just-a" whatever to God.



Colossians 3:14-15, 17, 23-24 points out that in everything we do, if we work at it with our whole being, we are God's children. There is no "just-a" in being a child of God! Here is the reason for our dignity.

In letting God be our Father, we become who we really are, the valuable person he created us to be. In some Eastern Catholic rites, when the faithful are given Jesus in the Eucharist, they are told: "*Be who you are.*" When we receive the Eucharist and enter into such a complete communion with Jesus, we are much more than any "just-a" person. We should leave Mass taking this unity with us by walking with Jesus and continuing the work he began.

The Church gives us the Feast Day of Joseph the Worker on May 1st to draw attention to and to celebrate the dignity of every kind of work that we do. When we offer our work whole-heartedly as a gift to the Lord, we experience this dignity. When we use the gifts and talents that God has given us, we experience our importance. But when we do a work just "because the boss told me to" or just "because I need the money", we limit ourselves into being a "just-a".

All work, when done for the Lord and with the Lord, is important, no matter how small or mundane it seems.

Every morning, our prayer should include: "Lord, help me to do today what You want me to do, in partnership with Your Holy Spirit." Then, when others think we're a "just-a", it doesn't matter. Why not? Because we know that whatever we do, Jesus is doing it through us — and there is no "just-a" about that!