

CO-CREATING WITH GOD THE FATHER THROUGH OUR WORK
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In the very beginning of the Bible, the book of Genesis, we first encounter God the Father hard at work as Creator of our universe. Through our work, God the Father allows humankind to participate in the creative unfolding of the divine plan. Renowned Franciscan scholar Cajetan Esser, OFM underscores the decisive importance of work:

Work as a participation in creation is the highest calling of man [and woman] prior to original sin, and therefore idleness does not present a picture of God, but a caricature of God....By working [each person] administers the dominion of God in creation, and thus, in God's image and likeness, renders visible the hidden Creator. (Cajetan Esser, OFM, *The Rule and Testament of St. Francis* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1977, p. 138)

“Work as participation in creation is the highest calling of man [and woman] prior to original sin.” That's a remarkable statement. I think the author means that we best reflect God's image and likeness when we are doing His work here on earth and doing it well. The basis for this statement can be found in Genesis 2:15:

“Yahweh God took Adam and settled him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate and care for it.”

Sr. Joan Chittester, OSB reflects on Genesis 2:15:

Adam was put in the garden to till it and to keep it, not to contemplate it; not to live off of it; not to lounge. Even in an ideal world it seems, God expects us to participate in the co-creation of the world. (“Work: Participation in Creation” in *Weavings*)

She continues:

Work is what we do to continue what God wanted done. Work is co-creative. Keeping a home that is beautiful and ordered and nourishing and artistic is co-creative. Working in a machine shop that makes gears for tractors is co-creative. Working in an office that processes loan applications for people who are themselves trying to make life more humane is co-creative. (*ibid.*)

Our Secular Franciscan way of life embraces this understanding of our work as a means to image the creative activity of God the Father in stating: *“Let them esteem work as a gift and a sharing in the creation....”* (art. 16)

Dialogue Starter

1. *Share an example of how you are creative and thus image God the Father.*