

Labor Day (in the U.S.) Weekend

The first Labor Day was observed on September 5, 1882, to celebrate the social and economic achievements of American workers and to give them a day off on the last day of the summer. Today, Labor Day unofficially signals the beginning of a new "school" year of work and study and the end of the lazy days of summer.

- 1) It is a day to acknowledge the dignity of labor and workers. a) The Bible presents God as working six days in the creation of the world and commanding Adam to work. b) Jesus, God's Son, was a professional carpenter. c) Most of his apostles were fishermen and Paul was a tent-maker. d) In his inaugural speech in the synagogue at Nazareth, Jesus expressed his preferential option for the poor – the working class.

- 2) The Church teaches the nobility of work and the necessity of just wages. In the encyclical *Laborem Exercens*, the Holy Father John Paul II instructs us that all of us are called to work together for a just society and a just economy which allow us all to share God's blessings. He reminds us that governments should see that the greed of a minority does not make the life of the majority miserable. He advises labor unions to fight for social and economic justice, better wages and better working conditions.

- 3) It is an appropriate time to acknowledge and bless the temporal and spiritual work that our parishioners do for their families and for the parish community. It is also a day to remind ourselves that our workplace gives us an opportunity to practice what we believe and that it is a place where we can display a level of integrity that matches our faith.