

Excerpts
Reflections: Work and Vocation

Richard A. Kauffman

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When we are not living up to our true vocation, thought deadens our life, or substitutes itself for life, or gives in to life so that our life drowns out our thinking and stifles the voice of conscience. When we find our vocation—thought and life are one.

--Thomas Merton, *Thoughts in Solitude*

Work is not primarily a thing one does to live, but the thing one lives to do. It is, or should be, the full expression of the worker's faculties, the thing in which he finds spiritual, mental, and bodily satisfaction.

--Dorothy Sayers, *Unpopular Opinions*

It is not only prayer that gives God glory but work. Smiting on an anvil, sawing a beam, whitewashing a wall, driving horses, sweeping, scouring, everything gives God glory if being in his grace you do it as your duty. To go to Communion worthily gives God great glory, but a man with a dung fork in his hand, a woman with a slop pail, give him glory too. He is so great that all things give him glory if you mean they should.

--Gerard Manley Hopkins, "The Principle or Foundation"

We are probably intended to embark upon a new work, or a new dimension of an old work, every seven years. This suggests the Jubilee cycle which incorporated the understanding that the seventh year, like the seventh day, marked the completion of a work, and that even the spent land would need a period of rest before being able to yield new fruits.

--Elizabeth O'Connor, *Cry Pain, Cry Hope*

The place God calls you to is where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet.

--Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC*

One can understand what play is only when one also knows what work is.

--Karl Barth, *Final Testimonies*

We must not grow weary of doing little things for the love of God, who looks not on the great size of the work, but on the love in it.

--Brother Lawrence, *The Practice of the Presence of God*

Lord, let me know clearly the work which You are calling me to do in life. And grant me every grace I need to answer Your call with courage and love and lasting dedication to Your will.

--"Vocation Prayer," *Saint Meinrad Prayer Book*