

The Virtues and the Subjective Meaning of Work

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Work is a central theme of modern Catholic social teaching. Leo XIII writes in *Rerum Novarum* about the need to improve the unjust condition of workers. In *Populorum Progressio*, Paul VI mentions three virtues of workers themselves: persistence, inventiveness and concentration. St. John Paul II makes a distinction between the objective and subjective meanings of work in *Laborem Exercens*. This paper will focus on the subjective meaning of work, the ways in which work helps us to actualize our potential as human persons. The virtues are related to the subjective meaning of work, because we actualize our human potential by becoming virtuous. The paper will discuss the virtues of workers with the help of Dominicans who have written about work, such as Antonin-Gilbert Sertillanges, O.P. (1863-1948); Vincent McNabb, O.P. (1868-1943); Marie-Dominique Chenu, O.P. (1895-1990); and Arthur Fridolin Utz, O.P. (1908-2001).