May 1st: Memorial of Saint Joseph the Worker

Gospel text (*Mt* 13,54-58): Jesus went to his hometown and taught the people in their synagogue. They were amazed and said, «Where did He get this wisdom and these special powers? Isn't he the carpenter's son? Isn't Mary his mother and aren't James, Joseph, Simon and Judas his brothers? Aren't all his sisters living here? How did he get all this?». And so they took offense at him. Jesus said to them, «The only place where prophets are not welcome is their hometown and in their own family». And he did not perform many miracles there because of their lack of faith.

«Where did He get this wisdom and these special powers?»

Fr. Xavier PARÉS i Saltor
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Today, we celebrate the feast of Saint Joseph the Worker. It is a holiday to rest from our daily chores, when we also commemorate the International Labor Day. Workers and their unions use to take advantage of this celebration to present their demands in defense of their rights. And the Church, today, offers us the example of Saint Joseph, the carpenter from Nazareth, who was a model worker, keeping up his family and developing his profession. This is the normal way to live in this world of ours; by earning one's own bread by the sweat of one's brow. Human rights tell us that each one of us has a right to a decent and well-remunerated job. This is how we fulfill our duties and are paid the salary we deserve. Saint Ambrose says «it is homicidal to deny a man the salary he needs for a living». Today, the Church prays for the working world, so that every worker may fulfill his/her duties and live with dignity.

The same Gospel introduces Jesus as the «carpenter's son» (Mt 13:56), in his own hometown of Nazareth, where He grew up and where He lived most of his terrestrial life. However, Nazareth's people did not really get to know the person of Jesus. They probably thought they knew him well, but they actually knew nothing at all. This is why they could not explain where was He getting his wisdom and special powers from.

But, we Christians, do we know enough about Jesus Christ? We also belong with his people, God's people, Church's people, and yet, it could happen to us the same as it happened to Nazareth's people, that is, that they knew him not. If we can learn good and positive things from any other person, even more so, we can learn out of Jesus of Nazareth. By listening to every day's Gospel is how we can know and learn many good things about Jesus. This is how we can enrich our life and our faith. Let us beg it from Saint Joseph, who did such a good job out of taking care of Jesus and loving him.