

“It’s Labor Day weekend already? Where has the summer gone?”

It seems every year we speak those words while frantically attempting to put together some sort of All American event. We gather the grill supplies, trim and detail the yard, invite the friends and neighbors, search for a good game on T.V. and lament the passing of the summer fun. We tend to be very busy this weekend – but the one thing we don’t do is WORK!

It is a tad strange that we celebrate the American *Labor* force by *not* working. It’s a bit like honoring the beef and pork industries by eating a salad, or participating in a walk-a-thon sponsored by the American Auto Union. But don’t get me wrong, I have also always appreciated the day off!

The first ever Labor Day was celebrated on Tuesday September 5, 1882 in New York. It wasn’t officially set as the first Monday in September until 1884 when the Central Labor Union urged other labor organizations to celebrate the holiday across the country.

The first state to enact the bill was Oregon on February 21 1887. By 1894 more than half the states had adopted the holiday – but it wasn’t until June 28th, 1948 that Congress passed an act making the first Monday in September a legal holiday.

Labor Day recognizes the economic and social achievements that have only been made possible by a historically strong working class in our country. Dedicated and hard working women and men have shouldered much of the burden of our country’s progress in the last 100+ years. Their labor *past* helped carve out our blessed *present* and has positioned us also for a bright future.

In the same way, this Labor Day, we can find rest and reflect on the labor of our Lord. While we honor those past and present who have and continue to work for our benefit, let us not forget to reflect on the work of Jesus Christ, accomplished on the cross.

It is a great opportunity to also *not work* for the one who *has* worked for us! His labor past has carved out for us our blessed present and called us to an eternally

glorious future. We can celebrate in this way each and every day, acknowledging that a great work has been done for us and, by the Holy Spirit in our baptism, in us. As you gather with family to honor the hard working women and men of our country, remind them and yourselves that we also honor a good God who has given to us the gifts, talents and abilities to accomplish that labor – but has done the great work of redemption himself.

Have a blessed Labor Day!