

Labor issues are becoming more prominent in today's world. More resources are needed for seeing these issues in the light of Christian faith. "A New Labor Litany" is offered here with this in mind. It is my updated version of Percy Dearmer's "Litany of Labour."

- *The Rev. Charles Hoffacker, priest of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington and a board member of the Frances Perkins Center.*

A NEW LABOR LITANY

For public or personal use, in whole or in part.

Responses appear in italics.

Section V can be adapted to include a different variety of occupations.

I

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

God the Father of all,

Have mercy on us.

God the Son, Redeemer of the world,

Have mercy on us.

God the Holy Spirit, renewing the face of the earth,

Have mercy on us.

Holy Trinity, one God,

Have mercy on us.

II

Jesus, born in poverty,

come to bring peace to the earth,

worker at Nazareth,

Have mercy on us.

Jesus, in whom the proud are scattered
and the mighty put down,
giving good things to the hungry,
exalting those of low degree,
Have mercy on us.

Jesus, who fills the valleys and levels the hills,
for whom every person is holy and precious,
who has taken all humanity into yourself,
Have mercy on us.

Jesus, in whom all the peoples of the earth are one,
in whom there is neither bond nor free,
Have mercy on us.

Jesus, proclaiming good news to the poor,
announcing release to the captives,
setting at liberty those in bondage,
Have mercy on us.

Jesus, friend of the impoverished,
host to the hungry,
physician to the sick,
Have mercy on us.

Jesus, lord of health,
vanquisher of early death,
lover of little children,
Have mercy on us.

Jesus, denouncing the oppressor,
advocating for the simple,
going about everywhere doing good,
Have mercy on us.

Jesus, pattern of gentleness,
teacher of transformative patience,
prophet of the reign of God,
Have mercy on us.

Jesus, tempted as we are,
constant in prayer,
companion of the outcast,
Have mercy on us.

Jesus, exposing hypocrisy,
challenging mammon worship,
and the stay of the humble,
Have mercy on us.

Jesus, forgiving those that love much,
calling to yourself all who labor
and all who carry heavy loads,
Have mercy on us.

Jesus, who came to serve,
who had no place to lay your head,
loved by everyday people,
Have mercy on us.

Jesus, deserted by your disciples,
condemned by those in power,
forsaken by the crowd,
Have mercy on us.

Jesus crucified for us and for everyone,
Have mercy on us.

Jesus, Voice of Justice,
you say to us,
“Whatever you have done to the least of these,
you have done to me,”
Have mercy on us.

III

From the love of money.
Good Lord, deliver us.

From dishonesty in daily life and work,
Good Lord, deliver us.

From forgetfulness of our obligations,
Good Lord, deliver us.

From anger and malice against opponents,
Good Lord, deliver us.

From neglect of our labor,
Good Lord, deliver us.

From contempt for others,
Good Lord, deliver us.

From offense against the powerless,
Good Lord, deliver us.

From oppression of the marginalized,
Good Lord, deliver us.

From envy of the rich,
Good Lord, deliver us.

From bondage to the ways of the world,
Good Lord, deliver us.

From hardness, narrowness, and distrust,
Good Lord, deliver us.

From a weak will and unstable purpose,
Good Lord, deliver us.

From a want of faith in the accomplishment of your will,
Good Lord, deliver us.

From pride, hypocrisy, and impatience,
Good Lord, deliver us.

From self-indulgent appetites and ways, and exploitation of other people,

Good Lord, deliver us.

From anger at our frustration, and envy of the advantages of others,
Good Lord, deliver us.

From negligence in prayer and worship, and failure to commend the faith that is
in us,
Good Lord, deliver us.

By your taking of our flesh,
by your humble birth,
by your hard life,
by your bitter death,
by your glorious resurrection and ascension,
Good Lord, deliver us.

IV

Be merciful to us.
Hear us, Lord Jesus.

By your recovering of sight to the blind,
Remove from us all prejudice.

By your teaching atop the Mount,
Lead us to hunger and thirst after righteousness.

By your miracle at Cana,
Increase among us the joy of life.

By your parables about riches,
Help us to share without regret.

By your witness to those in power,
Give us courage to stand against every wrong.

By washing your disciples' feet,
Equip us for humble service.

By your cry of forgiveness from the cross,
Teach us to love our enemies.

By your final agony,
Enable us to suffer for the truth.

By your presence in your Church for ever,
Keep us faithful to the law of love.

By the prayer you taught your disciples,
May we do your will on earth.

By your life and teaching,
*Make us to love God before all else,
 make us to love our neighbors as ourselves.*

V

Finally we pray, Lord, that you will guide, protect, and inspire all who labor to get their own living.

For workers who face peril and suffer pain,
We pray to you.

For those who harvest the lands and the waters,
We pray to you.

For those who work from home or in offices, for those laboring in factories, for all who buy and sell,
We pray to you.

For those who keep house, for those who care for adults in need or for children,
We pray to you.

For miners beneath the earth, for those who venture in far countries, for travelers by land or water, through the air, or beyond the earth,
We pray to you.

For all who live by strength of arm, for all who live by cunning of hand,
We pray to you.

For people retired from employment, that their activities may continue to enrich their lives and their communities, and that their insight and wisdom may bless us all,

We pray to you.

For all who control or direct enterprises large or small, whether private or public,
We pray to you.

For labor unions, their members, officers, and organizers, and for professional associations of every kind,
We pray to you.

For artists, scientists, and scholars;
for writers and teachers;
for physicians, nurses, and all practitioners of healing arts;
for workers in every faith community;
for lawyers and judges and court personnel;
for all contributing to a secure and just society;
for social workers and counselors;
for public servants at every level of government and in every place,
We pray to you.

And for all who are poor and broken and oppressed;
for all whose labor is without hope;
for all whose labor lacks recognition or respect;
for those who have too little leisure;
for those who lack a living wage;
for those who oppress workers through love of money;
for those who cannot find work;
for the handicapped and the sick;
for prisoners and outcasts;
and for all who are intemperate, luxurious, or cruel,
We pray to you.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
Have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
Have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
Grant us peace.

All

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. Amen.

Almighty God, you have so linked our lives one with another that all we do affects, for good or ill, all other lives: So guide us in the work we do, that we may do it not for self alone, but for the common good, and as we seek a proper return for our own labor, make us mindful of the rightful aspirations of other workers, and arouse our concern for those who are out of work; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*