

A LITURGY OF

Praise to Christ Who Labors Through His People

DOUGLAS MCKELVEY

LEADER: O Christ, Exalted Prince of Heaven,
O Christ, Radiant King of Earth,

PEOPLE: **Your glories are everlasting.**

You are the living head of your body,
the divine bridegroom of your church.

You are the desire of all nations.

You hold authority over death and life,
over all peoples and kingdoms,
over all principalities and powers.
All creation is your inheritance.

You are the fullness that fills all things.

Through you all things were created,
and by your redeeming works
all things will be made new.

All glory and power are yours, O Christ.

You lack nothing.

Indeed, you do not even need us, O Lord.
You do not need your children,
and yet you call us—
and calling us you choose
to labor in and among us,
accomplishing your holy purposes
through a most unlikely people.

**Who are we, that you have chosen us
to bear your name, O Christ?**

Who are we, that you have invited us
to serve as your hands and feet,
co-laboring with you unto the quiet increase
of your eternal kingdom?

**Apart from you, we have nothing to offer
but our weakness and our insufficiency.**

Yet when we bring these things to you,
you delight in using our poverty
to display your riches of grace,
and our weaknesses to display
your great strength.

For this we give you praise.

Apart from you we can do nothing.
We prove this over and over.
But when we abide in you,
and draw our life from you,
we become as flourishing branches,
nourished by your roots,
coursing with your life,
bearing much good fruit.

**So let it be, O Lord,
in our lives and in our churches.**

Forgive us, O Jesus, for the many times
we have failed to wear your name well.

Forgive us, O Lord.

Let our love grow ever more constant,
in imitation of your affections.

**Let our lives be marked by a more
joyful obedience, in gratitude for your grace.**

Let us—in your love, and in response
to your love—now lovingly undertake
all labors to which you have called us,
whether those labors in themselves
are small or grand, visible or hidden,
lauded or overlooked, rewarding or costly,
a seeming drudgery or a perpetual delight.

**Be always at work in us, among us,
and through us, O Christ.**

Let us give ourselves to all such labors,
knowing that through them
it is you we serve,
**for you receive every work
offered unto you.**

Let us give ourselves to all such labors,
knowing that we do not labor alone,
for it is you who labors through us.

Creation, salvation, and the redemption
and renewal of all things is your
great undertaking, O Lord, not ours.
The weight of details rests upon
your strong shoulders, not ours.
But you bid us join you, taking your yoke,
and laboring beside you in those places

you have appointed for us.
Sanctify and purify us now,
that we might be more fitting
vessels of your grace, your mercy,
your glory, your love.

**Glorify your name in us, among us,
and through us, O Christ.**

Let us live to serve you well,
in all the good works you
have prepared in advance
for us to do,

**in all the good works
you have prepared us
for the doing of.**

Work in us whatever is most pleasing
to you, O Lord.

Be strong in our weakness.

Be visible in our love.

Be glorified in our lives, O Christ.

We give you praise for making us your people.

**Use us now, to fulfill your purposes,
in the church, and in the world.**

O Christ who is always at work
in your people,

**O Christ who is always at work
among your people,**

O Christ who is always at work
through your people:

Let our labors be your labors.

Let our love be your love.

Let our grace be your grace.

Let our mercy be your mercy.

Love through us, O Lord.

Labor through us, O God.

Move through us, O Spirit.

We are your people.

We are your body and your bride, O Christ.

We owe all to you.

All we have is yours.

Now take, and bless, and break, and multiply
these many sundry gifts you have given us,
then send us out to do your works
for the love of our neighbors,
for the good of your people,
and for the increase of your glory.

**Make our lives ever more fruitful
for your kingdom.**

May we live and labor as a people
of the promise, not defined by
our broken past, but by our
glorious future, for all of history—and
each of our stories within it—rush forward
as glad rivers flowing toward a wedding
feast: the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Haste the day, O Lord!

Haste the day when our King
and Bridegroom returns. Haste the day
when we see at last the meaning
of all our labors, the unseen
poetry of our lives finally revealed,
as authored by you, and woven across time.

Come quickly, O Christ.

Haste the day when, with joyful songs,
we enter the fullness of all you have promised,
when we are forever liberated from our own
petty cares and desires and prides
and insecurities, and are freed at last
to receive and reflect with unveiled faces
the fullness of your relentless love
and resplendent glory.

Haste the day, O Lord, when your people
are adorned at last with the radiant beauty
that you have won for your bride.

Haste the day, O Christ!

For it is unto that day that we labor today.
Now as we walk this pilgrim road
together, Jesus,
drawing ever nearer to your coming kingdom,
may your light shine ever more brilliantly
from our lives, and your pure love be made
ever more visible in our actions,

even as you labor in us,
among us,
and through us,
unto your eternal ends, O Christ.

We give you praise!

Amen.