

## **Ode to Labor**

A Meditative Communion Poem Offered on September 4, 2011

By Reverend W. Dale Osborne

Lectionary Text: Matthew 18: 15-20

## **Ode to Labor**

Stoney and serene is your demeanor.  
In quiet truth you cause the wheel to turn the sickle to swing.  
The common man the common woman the common mule,  
All have been drawn to your compelling pleasure.  
Yours is the foundation of society

Who can evade the tasks of the laborer?  
All who think, who strive, who hammer, who sew or dare to teach  
Have answered the summons of labor at their doorstep.  
The sweet whisper of a job to be done.  
Yours, O labor are the pillars of the public good.

I have heard your call shouts the farmer!  
Constant is the morning when you draw me up before the sun.  
There are beasts to be milked, feed to be scattered and fields  
Welcoming my attention.  
Straight is the line I follow behind the plow.  
Footsteps pulled forward by the strength of my Morgan horse  
Or pushed along strains my shoulders and back against the rocky earth.

Weighty and wise is your character.  
Day after day you cause the axe to strike, the locomotive to churn.  
The teacher, the seamstress, the nurse and the janitor  
All respond to the merciful monotony you provide.  
Yours is the lust for liberty.

Who will work under your watchful eye today?  
All who perform, who prepare, who plead, who pump or yearn to satisfy  
Have felt your righteous request to meet the day with pride.  
To meet the newness or routine on the job site.  
Yours, O labor are the engines of positive movement.

I can answer your beckoning burden cries the nurse.  
Parking and walking and stairways aplenty bring me to my floor.  
This hospital is my home away from home.  
The patients under my care long for my wisdom, my technique and my touch  
on their tender pulsating hand.  
Tired and throbbing are the feet beneath my legs.  
But I know the code and I respond to the code to give life dignity.

Plentiful and rich is your reward.  
Year after year you watch the cityscapes rise.  
The beam walker, the stone mason and the architect  
Face wind and rain and boardrooms  
In order to erect the towering edifice on the skyline.

Who can refuse your patient pleading this year?  
None who know the victory of effort and the satisfaction of sacrifice  
Can deny the hunger of their child or the lacking of their neighbor.  
They run to meet the purpose of their passion.  
For labor is an able artist of beautiful design.

We are here to work and to love proclaim the teachers, preachers and social workers .  
We sense the child at table who struggles to find and write with his pen.  
We proclaim Love everlasting in holy communion.  
We hear the downtrodden and pick up on their skills.  
The labors we echo pull us close to the fire  
whose flames cannot consume us.  
There is love in labor there is labor in love – all who acknowledge seek help from above.