



June 23, 2020

## Extraordinary Prayer in Ordinary Time

by The Rev. Dr. Esther A. Kramer

The season we are in now -- between the Day of Pentecost and the First Sunday of Advent -- is often called "Ordinary Time." Sometimes, it's also called "the long, green season" because of the vestment colors and the summer season in the northern hemisphere.

This, of course, is no ordinary time. We struggle to find equilibrium in our world and in our lives.

During this upsetting time of health pandemic and social crisis, many of us feel adrift as we tune into details of the latest news cycle. We long to gather together for the Eucharist and desire consistency in our worship.

I believe one of the many reasons we can find Anglican worship comforting at these times is that it offers both tradition and flexibility, and opportunities to experience the transcendent in structures and ways that offer continuity and growth. It gives us patterns of movement and sequences that invite us to return regularly and refocus on what is most important -- to love, to create, to reason, and to live in harmony with creation and with God.

Several weeks ago on the Day of Pentecost, when we would normally see the bright red of the altar linens, we prayed, "O God, who on this day taught the hearts of your faithful people by sending to them the light of your Holy Spirit: Grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort."

Now, we find ourselves in "the green season" following Pentecost, signifying Ordinary Time. It may be even more important now than at any other time to imagine and associate the color green and life with this period of the church year that is foundational to living a life in Christ. As baptized Christians, we can fully inhabit this time after Pentecost because we are equipped

with the Holy Spirit and with the courage and will to persevere, and we have been marked as Christ's own forever.

In his letter to the Romans, Chapter 12:2, Paul writes, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

Because of our baptism, in this season, I believe the time is right to consider the transformative power of walking with God throughout the day using the Episcopal Church services of the Daily Office. It follows the pattern of monastic practice that marks a cycle of work and prayer. The *Book of Common Prayer* includes liturgies for the Daily Office in Morning Prayer, Noonday Prayer, Evening Prayer, and Compline.

I would also like to offer for your use and prayer *Daily Prayer for All Seasons*. This is also an Episcopal Church resource freely available to all of us. It is especially relevant now for adapting to the challenges of living a Christian life in extraordinary times. The section for "Ordinary Time" emphasizes creation and rest. It presents "a variety of images of God by including expansive and inclusive language about God, and it presents a variety of poetry, meditation, and prayers from the broader community of faith."

I hope you will join me in finding great comfort, during this not so "ordinary time," in the set of prayers that brings together writings from a diverse team on nonviolent social change, adaptations of prayers from *An African Prayer Book*, a variety of images of the divine feminine, poetry, and so much more.

I commend *Daily Prayer for All Seasons* to you for your prayer during this time of crisis, in this season of transformation, and throughout the year.