

A SUNDAY NIGHT PRAYER FOR ORDINARY TIMES:

Through even our closed eyes, Allah G_d Our Father,
let us see, in our most anguished moments,
how *not* to let our pain make us unkind.

Ill, or sad; disappointed;
alone with ordinary irritations –
maybe cranky –
help us not be testy.

Maybe short, maybe brittle –
and on such days,
remind us that it is humbler,
kinder
to declare our troubled mood
and ask forgiveness in advance
so that the sting of our brittleness
will hurt others less.

These great loves,
these clenching heartaches,
the small recurring resurrections --
Allah G_d Our Father,
bless the moments of our Ordinary Times.
Help us to bless each other gently,
with knowing non-accusing smiles,
with understanding care.

**WHOEVER HAS EARS OUGHT TO HEAR.
HEAR, AND BE COMFORTED.**

GLORIOUS ORDINARINESS

Thank you for coming together tonight. We all could have lingered through twilight on the beach; or lazed in front of a judiciously placed fan, favorite iTunes, the NY Times *Book Reviews*, ice cubes clinking.

Instead, we came together, looking into the plain ordinary face of the 14th Sunday of Ordinary Time.

Ordinary

It's the way we each week seek again each other's familiar faces. Reassurance for a few hours on an ordinary Sunday, un-marked by anything more notable than 88 degrees of soft warm just plain LIFE.

A time to listen to the music of the earth and each other's voices. To rediscover the common clay of which we each are a momentary enlivened clod. Clods to which we shall in some other moment return, having ennobled or been ennobled by all these ordinary moments of our lives.

Ordinariness

Rarely is it "orderly" while we are going through it.

Mostly, it's a lifelong ebb and flow of grief and delight. Loss and discovery. Anguish and reassurance. Debilitating darkness and exuberant vision.

And days of almost no complexion at all – dim, dull, more reactive than deliberative. Plodding mini-respites from the weary challenge of conscious choices.

Tonight

Look around for a moment at the faces by your side, behind you, in front of you. Go ahead – connect. Eyes. Touch. Smiles. Knowing smiles.

Ordinary Sunday No.14

Sunday, July 10th 2011

Each of us stepped out of the rhythm of the rest of our day, driven to be together tonight for reasons not always compelling, but at least inviting, teasing us into each other's presence for the moments of Hope that we share.

Ordinary People

Ordinary heartaches. Ordinary hopes. Ordinary pleasures. Ordinary distractions. Ordinary worries. Ordinary disappointments. Ordinary illnesses and sometimes extraordinary recoveries because of someone's tenderness.

Ordinary hollowness that at times we tend to feel more poignantly, more questioningly, when everything else is quiet.

We're not alone. Here, we reassure each other of that in ways as simple as just being here tonight. Ordinary faithfulness. Ordinary companionship. Ordinary stretching to do a little more than mope through a sultry summer day.

Ordinary Times

Are *fertile* times. When little else stimulates and distracts, we're more likely to meander into profound or small life-changing insights. Into thankfulness. Into new understandings and proactive compassion during our own gnawing empty times.

The ordinary respites pull our roots a little deeper, tease new possibilities into being, grow us into fruit and fruition.

The quiet, steady nurturing of Life goes on in the underground of nothing spectacular; during private storms and turbulence; during personal and inter-personal sufferings; searing breaks and crumbings that those closest to us may or may not observe, but we feel keenly.

Ordinary Time – a Time To Remember

Remember the *power* of our own very ordinariness. To take a fresh look at the sacred meaning of ourselves and of those sitting nearby, and reverence each other anew for the commitments that

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A POEM OF RECOGNITION

From the Clod of Me to You, My Sister-Brother Clods

From what great depth of pain,
this sudden grief that chokes?

From the crater-lake of unwept tears,
the well of no beginning and no end,

From the liquid sorrows of the earth,

From the womb of all that is;

From the WE . . .
the heaving,
rending,
unfinished birth of
who we are Yet-To-Be.

From the WE of US.

WHOEVER HAS EARS OUGHT TO HEAR.
HEAR, AND BE COMFORTED.

And finally . . .

And now, in wonder,
I've come to the promised place.
I've become The Promise.

I have felt the tenderness
of the Gardener's Hand.
I've seen both peace and sorrow
bend together 'neath the frost.
I've held hope constant
'tho precious seeds scattered out of reach
and fragile roots were torn
and tears were the only rain
on Earth's barrenness
and mine,
and the warming sun was hid.

And now, from this field which
Your Hand has so gently sown,
O God of my heart,
Hear the song of my trust
And look with delight
on the promise I've become.

Behold! I am as You bid me to be.
Behold! I come.

Thankfulness is my hymn
as I see at last the pure blossoms
of Your love
bursting through the barrenness
of the whole earth
and mine.

WHOEVER HAS EARS OUGHT TO HEAR.
HEAR, AND BE COMFORTED.

drive us to make time to nurture each other's hope by just being here.

**THUS DOES GOD PREPARE THE LAND: DRENCHING ITS FURROWS,
BREAKING UP ITS CLOUDS.**

Clods have to be crushed, broken apart first, before they can come together more clingingly to nurture new life.

Trenches have to be *dug* -- *dug deep* -- with cutting blows -- to hold rain and roots.

Clods, all of us, let us hear. Understand. Be comforted.

**GOD SOFTENS THE LAND WITH SHOWERS,
BLESSING ITS YIELD.**

Sudden thunders, piercing lightnings reduce the majesty of trees and fields to barest soaked survival. Yet; new life makes its way through the strongest roots and stems to sustain the vigor of all.

Broken at times ourselves, sometimes unwittingly breaking others, let us go gently, with faith, with insight, with kindness.

**GOD CROWNS THE YEAR WITH BOUNTY.
GOD'S PATHS OVERFLOW WITH A RICH HARVEST.
EVEN THE UNTILLED MEADOWS OVERFLOW WITH IT.**

Even the untilled meadows -- the fallow fields, uncared for by anyone. Unnoticed, until suddenly they're unmistakably awesome.

Like people we all know. Like ourselves in our most dreaded inner moments that can come on us in a flash on an ordinary day.

**BLESSED ARE YOUR EYES, BECAUSE THEY SEE,
AND YOUR EARS, BECAUSE THEY HEAR.**

Ordinary Time. Our Everyday. How we live when nobody's looking.

We know that all creation is groaning in labor pains even until now;

and not only that, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, we also groan within ourselves.

Ordinary Time. A time to remember the questionings we sometimes try to ignore.

To understand --and to forgive because we understand. To forgive the dark unenlightened actions of our own not-best moments, and those of others who may have wounded us in a dark moment of their own.

Time to breathe deeply and know that our Moms were right – it all works together, somehow, to bring about what God intends.

Time to sigh and remember that our growth and virtue, and the evolution of human potential in ways we haven't even imagined, can never be thwarted, even by wars and torture and injustice.

Not even by the heart-crunching gazillion small and big torments of our individual troubled ordinary days. .

**ORDINARY SUMMERTIME --
A Time For Poets and Muses**

Time at the beach. On a rooftop. In front of an air conditioner . . .

Time for **Dante's *Divine Comedy*** – or write your own.

Time to revisit **William W. Longfellow's *Leaves of Grass*:**

Re-examine all you have been told at school or church or in any book.

Dismiss whatever insults your own soul, and your very flesh shall be a great poem and have the richest fluency not only in its words but in the silent lines of its lips and face and between the lashes of your eyes and in every motion and joint of your body.

Time to pick up **Henry David Thoreau's *A Yearning Toward Wildness*** and tune-in to each other's murmurs, and to share the symphony of heartbeats and other sounds that even subways can not obliterate.

Thoreau, on the transition from dark to dawn, says: I love that early twilight hour when the crickets still creak right on with such dewy faith and promise, as if it were still night – expressing the innocence of morning. The Earth Song of the cricket! Before Christianity was, it is.

At the end of the day,
any ordinary day,
we can pray the poem-prayer of a dying nun-friend as her community celebrated reconciliation after they all had grown (at last) into a humble reverence for their diversity.

**“In the autumn of my life,
Behold again the promise of my youth:
when joy was the measure of my hopes
and Life needed only Your gentle rains
and warming sun
to bring blooms to the Earth's barrenness
and mine.**