**Prayer for Maturity**

Inspired by Romans 12:1-2

God, you invite us to

Take our everyday, ordinary life—

Sleeping, waking, eating, driving, planning, getting to appointments

 Weighing risks of safety versus quality,

 Being mindful of self while respectful of differences that come in community

 Trying to fit in and yet maintaining uniqueness—

 This everyday, ordinary life and place it before you.

To place our face-paced, information filled, connected and too oft lonely time,

To lift up this life that creates wrinkle lines and stress related disease

 That holds youth in the light and hides age in the shadows

 That scorns those who cannot keep up and dismisses memories as yesterday’s news,

To take all this life and place it before you knowing

 that we don’t even think about what we are doing

 Or consider where we are headed.

We assume that we know what to do and what is expected,

 What to hide and what to reveal

 So automatic are our thoughts, so quick our reactions, that we aren’t even aware

 Of your embrace.

Until we stop.

And breathe the long inhale that nurtures wisdom

And release the slow exhale full of confining cultural expectations

 Breathing them into the freedom of the universe.

In. And out. Again. Receiving and Releasing.

And we pause. We remember.

We allow our minds to be full of you.

We listen.

And you invite us to ponder anew

 How it is that we can reflect your light—

 How we can hold your God-life that disrupts the mindless routines of ordinary

 And forms instead, the extraordinary:

 The mindful, the mature, the considerate, the passionate

 Your God-life that provides the space and time,

 That provides the ability and desire to live with purpose

 To find meaning

 To express gratitude

 And to be grounded in the love--

 Love that can only come from the center of all that is or ever was or ever will be.

And then, we can embrace this gift of maturity, this gift of years

 Reflecting on time long past

 and open to the future which lays ahead

 Receiving the gifts ripe with reflection.

And You, gracious God, rejoice.

 And life is extra-ordinarily connected once again

 as we recognize this maturity that comes from faith

 as gift for all who are aging.

And we embrace your joy and resound with our own “Amen”.

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