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## *A Prayer for the Days After Election Day*

**An article from the Cathedral Times  
by the Very Reverend Samuel G. Candler,  
Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip**

*On 8 November 2010, the Downtown Atlanta Rotary Club featured Cynthia Tucker and Ralph Reed as a panel reviewing the previous week's election results. To open the meeting, The Very Rev'd Samuel G. Candler delivered this invocation:*

O God, in the days following elections, some are exultant, others despondent. Some are wary, some are triumphant. Some will forge forward, or back, depending upon the issue. Some will gather, harvesting fruit whose seeds were planted long ago. Some will seek to sow new seeds, into soil now plowed, turned up and over, but also fertile and expectant.

The political life is a rough and tumble life. It is for those who inspire fresh vision, but who also know how to scarp and scrape. It attracts the wise and savvy, and also the naïve and boisterous. It lifts up the lowly, and it humbles the exalted.

And so we remember the words of the Preacher of old. "For everything there is a season. A time to be born, and a time to die. A time to plant, and a time to pluck up. A time to break down, and a time to build up. A time to weep, and a time to laugh. A time to mourn, and a time to dance. A time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together. A time to seek, and a time to lose. A time to keep silence, and a time to speak." (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8). Or, as the Singer sang, "To everything there is a season. Turn, turn, turn."

The United States of America, at our best, turns gracefully. We engage the dance of politics every two years, or every four years, or every six years, with some trepidation and some missed steps. Some of us stumble, or step on each others' feet, or even knock down our partners. But some of us twirl splendidly, knowing exactly when to grasp and when to let go. Some of us leap to heights which we have never before ascended.

Then, after two, or four, or six, or sixteen, years, our dance ends. We tire, or watch a new troupe come forward, with new moves and routines" or maybe it is an old routine with some fresh twists. We turn, turn, turn.

Gracious God, we thank you for those who offer themselves for public service; we thank you for those who participated in last week's elections. Teach all of us to turn gracefully. Teach us to win gracefully. Teach us to lose gracefully. In grace, we realize that you, O God, have created us all. We are, together, citizens of a greater community than our fenced-off political pastures. And you, O God, have loved us all" winners and losers, the exalted and the humbled.

Wherever our political loyalties lie, O God, show us grace in our relationships and deliberations in the days to come. Show us love of God, and love of neighbor. AMEN.

Sam Candler signature



The Very Rev. Sam Candler

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