

■ PRAYER SERVICE ■

Striving for Integrity

CALL TO PRAYER

Leader Praise, O servants of the Lord
Praise the name of the Lord!

All Blessed be the name of the Lord
From this time forth and forevermore!

From the rising of the sun to its setting
The name of the Lord is to be praised!
Psalm 113:1-3

Leader Gracious God, we gather in this place today mindful that you call us to carry on your healing work in the world and to strive for the realization of your kingdom even now. We are also mindful that you call us to integrity—to being who you call us to be, personally and organizationally, and to expressing who we say we are in all that we say and do. Be with us during this time, opening our minds and our hearts, so that our time together may contribute to a strengthening of our own integrity and that of our organization. We ask this in your name. Amen. ☩

READING

We tend to accept a divided life, acquiescing to an apparent necessity to maintain a "split personality." That is, often we act as one person, following one set of goals and standards in our private lives, while we become a strikingly different person—someone molded by expediency and necessary compromises—at work.

Of course, the problem of personal integrity or wholeness does not reside exclusively in the disparities between our "private" and "working" selves. In moments of clarity, most of us can recall reasons to regret the gap between who we ought to be and who we actually are. Nevertheless, one's working life is a powerful source of the fragmentation and estrangement of self from self. . . . It is not merely because work occupies so many of our hours. It is also because work is central to the practical life of goal-setting and decision-making, of personal and inter-personal achievement. For many of us, it is the fount of our well-being. . . .

Our desire for wholeness or integrity has both a personal and a communal, or organizational, component. "Integrity" comes from the Latin adjective *integer*: whole, complete,

single (in the sense of 'pure'). As an abstract noun, 'integrity' thus signifies the condition of being one or whole, whether the thing in question is a whole number, a whole person, or a whole institution. . . . At the personal level, integrity refers to our ability to be wholly consistent in ourselves and in our actions. At the organizational level, integrity requires that conditions or structures exist that allow us, as workers, to become and to remain whole.

These aspects of integrity pose two questions. . . . The first question, at the level of personal integrity: *What kind of person should I as a manager or employee strive to become? The second question, at the level of organizational integrity: What kind of organizational community should I as a manager or employee strive to build and maintain? . . .*

Why is the Christian (or another religious) tradition so important in overcoming the divided life? . . . The Christian social tradition promotes integrity by clarifying the goals or ends to which human beings are called to aspire, and the ways of living toward those ends that follow the Gospel. . . . This tradition persistently asks the questions, "What is the end and purpose of my work?" and "How does this end influence how I work?" It examines how we focus our work toward a unified end or purpose for our whole lives. ☩

Helen J. Alford and Michael J. Naughton, *Managing as if Faith Mattered*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, IN, 2001, pp. 7-8, 19

RESPONSE

Lord God, with utmost confidence in your power to transform each of us, we come to you seeking wholeness in ourselves and in our institution. Help us, as individuals and as an institution, to become what you have called us to be. Strengthen us with moral courage that we not waver in doing what is right and just and consistent with a people called to your ministry of healing. We ask this in your name. Amen. ☩



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