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Coronavirus and the Daily Office

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My reflections on the Daily Office:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLDtm5aqtLCz1XZDhApzJvGqdrxCkIF1Z4>

<https://soundcloud.com/alastairadversaria/sets/morning-prayer-lectionary>

The ACNA Book of Common Prayer is available for purchase and download here:
<http://bcp2019.anglicanchurch.net/>.

If you have any questions or feedback, please send them to me on Curious Cat:
<https://curiouscat.me/zugzwanged>.

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The audio of all of my videos is available on my Soundcloud account:
<https://soundcloud.com/alastairadversaria>. You can also listen to the audio of these episodes on iTunes: <https://itunes.apple.com/gb/podcast/alastairs-adversaria/id1416351035?mt=2>.

Transcript

Welcome back. Over the next few months, many of us will largely be restricted to our houses. Many of our churches won't be meeting or we'll be staying away from them due to the Coronavirus.

And this time will test and it will reveal the depth and breadth of the life of the church beyond the Sunday morning service. For too many Christians and churches, it will expose the shallowness of their individual and communal Christian life and the dearth of

intensive and extensive Christian formation and practice of community. Once the pulpit, the altar, and the stage have been removed from our midst, what actually remains? And for many, the answer may be not much.

Will we be there to care for and be present to each other where help is needed? Will we find ways to serve and galvanize and mobilize our communities even when we can't meet in person or we don't have a central location that we're all gathering in? The next few months will almost certainly change us and our societies in various ways, both small and potentially large in the medium term and maybe also in the long term. And it's at times like this, of such significant upheaval or change, that we are the most susceptible to significant shifts in our values, our priorities, and our habits. And so it's imperative that we are mindful of how we respond to this.

We should be cognizant of both the dangers and the possibilities and ensure that we don't waste this as an opportunity for growth. It's also important to reflect upon the ways in which we've already responded. Every single one of us, to some extent or other, has responded or not responded to this situation and those responses reveal things about us that we should reflect upon.

Where have we failed? How did our trust or information networks prove unreliable or succeed? Where did they best prepare us? Who are the people in our networks that are responding in the best and most admirable ways? What of our existing habits are best serving us now? Where are we finding existing habits causing problems? These are all questions that we need to ask ourselves at a time when we have the potential for growth and change, where we're challenged to look at the ways that we've been doing things to this point. We should not let that opportunity pass us by. And this video isn't any detailed engagement with these questions that are raised by the coronavirus, the ways that we should respond to it.

There are far more people with far more expertise to speak to that. There are ways in which I can speak to that and may speak to that in the future, but it's not really my place to speak to the medical questions or anything like that. Listen to the experts.

Rather, I have one recommendation to make. I've devoted at least this year and probably most of next year to encouraging and providing resources for the practice of the daily office or the daily study of scripture. The daily office is a practice of the in which Christians in various communities, families and their personal lives can observe a common pattern of worship, prayer and Bible reading, which punctuates their days.

And in the book of common prayer, which I use and many of the rest of us follow, there are prayers for morning, for midday and for evening. And some communities and families and individuals practice prayers at all of these times, whereas many others will just do one or two. And in the absence of gathered public worship, I highly recommend that we take the opportunity to adopt the practice of common private worship as an

extension of, and in our current extreme situation, a partial substitute for gathered public worship.

Thanks to the very generous support of a number of kind donors, I have freely available reflections upon the lectionary for anyone who is interested in exploring the scriptures in depth. And it would be wonderful to have people join us as we look through the text, as we read the scriptures all the way through and we think about the various passages and reflect upon their deep themes. There are many other resources to be found online as well.

Look around and find some of the things out there, not least the new ACNA book of common prayer, which is free to download. And I'll give the link to that in the show notes. If you do not want to practice the daily office, please at least take this opportunity to develop your families or your personal practice of daily devotions and scripture reading.

In the absence of regular church meetings or just more generally, it's very important to have that time spent in scripture, in prayer and in reflection upon the things of God. The next few months will be a lot of different things, but in many ways it is a jolt from reality and an opportunity to mature and to grow into new and better habits. And we should not let this go to waste.

Thank you very much.