

# Prayer for Pandemic **BOTH/AND**

By Denise M. Cawley

In process theology, we stop viewing the world with a binary lens. Rather than life being dreadful or wonderful, evil or good, or the world existing in only binaries of male/female, or right or wrong, we look instead through the lens of **BOTH/AND** as opposed to **EITHER/OR**.

Today, we hold so much. We are overflowing with **BOTH/AND**.

Pandemic brings us **BOTH** unexpected joy **AND** suffering beyond measure. We have **BOTH** dolphins jumping in the canals of Venice in clear waters, **AND** less smog in Los Angeles than has existed in 50 years.

Pandemic conditions **BOTH** allow us time to call friends **AND** long to hug them in person.

We are **BOTH** fearful of what is to come **AND** counting all our blessings.

We are **BOTH** confronted with too much idle time **AND** finding time for cleaning, gardening **AND** yoga.

This pandemic brings **BOTH** sleepless nights **AND** Tupperware cupboards that are finally organized.

We are **BOTH** wildly grateful for our nurses, occupational therapists, doctors and respiratory therapists, **AND** we are frightful for their wellbeing and safety.

We are experiencing **BOTH** cabin fever **AND** trepidation to leave home.

We are **BOTH** grateful for the slowing down of our lives **AND** honoring the people working twice as many hours trying to serve us.

We **BOTH** mourn all the occasions we are missing: the graduations, the birthdays and the family dinners, **AND** relish the gift that is life in a body.

We **BOTH** experience negative emotions **AND** heal ourselves by naming and expressing these fearful thoughts. Those of us with children are **BOTH** trying to make their online homework experience both educational and positive, **AND** hoping we have doled out just the right amount of screen time to keep them quiet while we are on Zoom calls.

We might be **BOTH** grateful for this time at home **AND** miss our loved ones terribly.

If we are alone, time might be **BOTH** a joy **AND** a burden.

During this time of so much grief, may we find our new rhythms of the day.

May we be kind to our souls, when productivity is not possible **BOTH** when we feel stuck in fear **AND** cannot move. May we call a friend when thoughts of drinking too much alcohol, consuming more ice cream, **AND** "Oh, is that a bag of chips I forgot about?" diminish our will power.

May we sanitize our credit card rather than using it to buy that really cool thing advertised on Facebook this morning. Why are the ads so much more interesting these days? May we honor this grief, this massive loss **AND BOTH** love ourselves **AND** be gentle with our souls.

May we hold all the real feelings **AND** express them in journals, diaries **AND** in our hobbies. May our spiritual practices bloom. May we reach out to our community. May we feel a love that is greater than us, holding us all.

For this time where we are holding both more than we can stand and more than we ever imagined, I pray.  
Amen