

Immeasurable Power

By the Rev. Reagan Gonzalez

I have worshipped in the Episcopal Church all of my life. I have been on staff at Episcopal churches, both as a lay person and now as an ordained person, since college. I have never known an Episcopal church that wasn't politically mixed, let alone theologically, liturgically, and otherwise.

I do not believe our assortment of thoughts and practices is accidental or happenstance, but rather genuinely Anglican. It is one of the many ways that the Church lives out her identity rooted in *via media*, the middle way, and I truly believe one of the greatest hopes for the Church is that it is one of the last places in our society where people of diverse thought can come together simply to know, care for, and love one another.

Many of us know, however, that the Church has also never been completely void of pain, unhealthy patterns, and occasional toxicity. The division we've witnessed this past year alone is heavy to carry at best, and at its worst leaves us in a place of despair and anguish. When I was first asked to write about great power this division is what came to mind. All sides, not unlike rival groups and families of biblical times, desire to hold power over their enemies, that is, to win.

To have power from a human perspective is to conquer and defeat our enemies. During this time of civil unrest, having power means to self-righteously feel intellectually and morally superior, without having to undergo the messy work of having to listen, get to know, or try to understand where the other side is coming from.

Thank God, however, that Jesus' power is not held to human standards. From his humble birth to his unjust crucifixion, Jesus turned our idea of power upside down. For Jesus, power is in vulnerability. Jesus' power is in blessing those who curse you, showing mercy to the stranger, and bringing healing to those places where hope has faded.

This is the kind of power that Paul is praying we can know in Ephesians. Not the kind of power that puts us ahead of those who think differently, but rather the kind of power that calls us to fall on our knees and repent when needed, to listen intentionally to the pain and fear our enemies are facing in their lives, and to love, genuinely love, all whom we encounter.

God's power is great. God's power created the stars, rained manna in the desert, healed the sick, fed the hungry, conquered death, and gave us the gift of resurrection. It is this immeasurable power, this immeasurable upside-down power made up of humility, vulnerability, and love that will heal the world.

Questions for reflection

In what ways would you define power?

How have you experienced power by human standards?

How have you experienced God's power?

Can you remember a time when God's power working through someone was a gift to you?

Can you remember a time when God's power working through you was a gift to someone?