

Prayer offered by Richard A. Rhem

At the Celebration of the Life of
Nancy Kay Edelmayer

November 9, 2011

God of Love, God of Life,
we have gathered in this place, in this hour,
still reeling from the shock,
the abrupt, wrenching away
of someone so loved,
someone so very much an anchor of loving support,
a mother, grandmother, great grandmother and friend,
whose vital presence was such a strong center
of the family circle
and the extended community.

We know that death awaits us all,
that from the moment we emit our borning cry
there is for all of us a final farewell.
Yet, especially when the leave-taking is sudden,
it seems too soon.
Though spared the agonizing pain and suffering
of a slow, deteriorating death,
there has been no time for proper goodbyes,
no time to say things so often felt but left unsaid,
no time for mutual blessing and holding and hoping.

And thus, the grieving comes so sharply, cuts so deeply,
because there has been no time
for easing into the inevitable,
to adjust to the loss.

Thus, we feel bereft of one
whom it seemed would always be there,
an anchor, a rock, a steadying presence.

We remember in these moments the way she was.
Images tumble through our mind:
She was a natural leader,
strong, knowing her own mind,
decisive, yet open, marked by good humor.
She was without pretence;
there was an authenticity about her; she never put on airs.
Her honesty was refreshing if sometimes devastating;
she had little patience for the games people play

when they are being less than honest.
But somehow her strength, her presence larger than life,
was wrapped in warmth,
in compassion, empathy and good humor.
She was kind and generous.
She had a big heart and she loved deeply.

No wonder then, O God, her death leaves such a crater, such emptiness.
And no wonder we are gathered to celebrate her good life,
to remember and give thanks
for the gift we have shared.
And on this, the eve of her 80th birthday,
we remember the words of the Psalmist,
“three score years and ten or by reason of strength, four score years “...
Four score years she lived, lived well and fully,
and then made her own 911 call.
For her good death, we give you thanks, O God.

Where love looms large loss is large as well.
Where bonds of love are tight,
when broken, grief and loss are painful.
All of that we own, we acknowledge without denial . . .

Yet we sense as well the beauty of this life
lived well with love and grace,
ending in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,
confident that new vistas of wonder await,
confident that all will be well,
all will be well,
all manner of things will be well.

Amazed by grace, now home,
we rejoice for her, with her,
and we worship you, O good and gracious God,
through Jesus Christ our Lord who taught us all to pray saying,

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors;
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever.
Amen.