



## **Florence Li Tim-Oi, Memorial, February 26**

**Added to the Book of Alternative Services  
Calendar of Holy Persons, General Synod 2004**

### **Sentence**

Psalm 116:11 (BAS) I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord.

### **Collect**

Loving God, giver of all good gifts,  
fill us with your grace,  
that we, like your servant Tim-Oi,  
first woman to be ordained an Anglican priest,  
may entrust you with our destiny.  
May we, with her same forbearance in the face  
of adversity, witness to you in all things;  
through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and forever. Amen.

## **Readings**

Psalm 116:1-12

Refrain: Common Refrain 7: Behold, I come to do your will, O God.

Galatians 3:23-28

Luke 10:1-9

## **Prayer over the Gifts**

God of mercy,

accept all we offer you this day.

May we who celebrate this Eucharist

be constant in our service to you

and to each other,

as we follow Jesus Christ,

the One in whom we have our life. Amen.

## **Proper Preface of a Saint**

## **Prayer after Communion**

Gracious God,

you gather us to be your holy people,

the body of Christ in the world.

Increase in us the virtues of patience and devotion that,

like Tim-Oi, we may live always in your radiance.

We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.

## General Synod 2004 Resolution

### BE IT RESOLVED:

That this General Synod authorize the inclusion of the Rev'd Florence Li Tim Oi as a Memorial in the BAS Calendar of Holy Persons on February 26, the date of her death.  
(Carried)

### EXPLANATORY NOTE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

At her birth in 1907 Li Tim-Oi's father called her "Much Beloved". When she was baptised as a student Tim-Oi chose the name Florence from 'The Lady of the Lamp'. Florence is celebrated world-wide for the witness to Christ that she lived out as the first female priest in the Anglican Communion. In 1931 at the ordination of a deaconess, she heard and responded to the call to ministry. She was made Deacon in 1941, and was given charge of the Anglican congregation in the Portuguese colony of Macao, thronged

with refugees from wartorn China. When a priest could no longer travel from Japanese-occupied territory to preside for her at the eucharist, the Bishop of Hong Kong asked her to meet him in Free China, where on 25 January 1944 he ordained her “a priest in the Church of God”. To defuse controversy, in 1946 she surrendered her priest's license, but not her Holy Orders, the knowledge of which carried her through Maoist persecution. For the next 39 years, she served faithfully under very difficult circumstances, particularly after the Communists took over mainland China. In 1983, arrangements were made for her to come to Canada where she was appointed as an honorary assistant at St. John's Chinese congregation and St. Matthew's parish in Toronto.

The Anglican Church of Canada had by this time approved the ordination of women to the priesthood and in 1984, the 40th anniversary of her ordination; Ms. Li was, with great joy and thanksgiving, reinstated as a priest. This event was celebrated not only in Canada but also at Westminster Abbey and at Sheffield in England even though the Church of England had not yet approved the ordination of women.

From that date until her death in 1992, she exercised her priesthood with such faithfulness and quiet dignity that she won tremendous respect for herself and increasing support for other women seeking ordination. She was awarded Doctorates of Divinity by General Theological Seminary, New York, and Trinity College, Toronto.

The very quality of Ms. Li's ministry in China and in Canada and the grace with which she exercised her priesthood helped convince many people through the communion and beyond that the Holy Spirit was certainly working in and through women priests. Her contribution to the church far exceeded the expectations of those involved in her ordination in 1944. She died on 26 February 1992.