

A Prayer for Murder Victims' Families

By Maria Hines

God of merciful love,
Help these families who are victims of murder
To accept the reality of such senseless acts of violence
Without, at the same time,
Succumbing to the despair of so great a loss.
May this violence become for them, instead,
A steppingstone toward greater union with you.

Teach them the forgiveness that was exemplified
By Jesus as he said,
"Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."
And through his redemptive love,
Show your mercy to the perpetrators of these crimes.

Fill the emptiness of their victim hearts
With the fire of your divine love
So as to transform their losses
Into a healing power
For themselves and for our world.
Amen.

[Maria Hines, of Louisville, Kentucky, is a former board member of Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation, as well as the founder and director of its Kentucky affiliate. In 1989 her brother, a Virginia State trooper, was killed in the line of duty. The man who killed Jerry Hines received a death sentence. Before his execution, Maria forgave Dennis Eaton and, unsuccessfully, sought clemency for him. She continues her work as a staunch opponent of the death penalty through her own organization and through membership in the Kentucky Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty.]