



A liturgy for the crowd gathered by the morgue

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Father, in the midst of just another busy day,
I pass by the entrance to the morgue.
There are men and women waiting
to take the body of their beloved away to be buried.

For me, this is another moment
in another day
in a series of years
of doing what I can for the sufferers
who pass through these hospital gates.
I will go home at the end of the day to have dinner with my family
and rise to do it all over again.

For them, this day divides
between a before and an after,
between a past they understood with their beloved
and a future they cannot imagine without them.
Now there is absence,
and the mourners huddle together
to move on in any way they can find.

I see them so near
and yet feel so far away from their grief.

Nevertheless, we have been brought together,
for they carried their beloved here,
hoping that we could save them,
that we could banish the threat of darkness
and bring light again to their eyes.
Hoping that they wouldn't be standing
in the end
where they are standing now
by the entrance of the morgue.

We are closer than I know,
closer than I feel.
We each will have our turn where they are standing even now.

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Bless, O Heavenly Father, the parents who have lost their children.
 Bless, O Son of God, the children who have lost their parents.
 Bless, O Holy Spirit, the spirit of this family and friends in the days ahead
 that they may bear one another's burdens
 and weep with those who weep.
 May their grief dig deep the roots of love.

And bless me also, O Lord,
 that I would see your image in each face that I pass,
 that the sorrows around me would grow in me a heart of compassion,
 that this daily work would make me more like my savior Jesus Christ.

Amen.

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