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Human Rights Day
12/10/23

Death Penalty Prayer Vigil For Victims and their families

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We Wrestle

God of all that is ever before us
you have given all things life
 both seen and unseen
 the vast depths of the sky
 to the very deep of the oceans
all things are because your word spoke it into life and beauty
the very breath that all life breathes is your breath
 your life
 your gift to all that has life
we thank you for the gift of creation
 for the gift of beauty
 for the gift to see
 to hear
 to be immersed in all that is

we thank you
 too
 for our chance to bring life
 into the world you created
 for the child that uniquely touches life
 and reminds us how to explore and delight
 in all that unfolds along the paths of our lives
 for the chance to work and build a family
 for the grace to witness to your mercy in our own lives

every day brings a new opportunity to be a reflection of your life

still
God
as much as we can sit with you and enjoy the life around us
 we struggle when
 hurt
 violence
 and deep pain rips our soul
 life now has limits
 beauty is struck down
 the world has thrown us off
 and you
 God
 are too far away

all that we have trusted
to be true
is gone

the murder of a loved one does this God
Blood is spilled forth
and the earth soaks it up
holding sacred
the memory of the life lived
voices speak support
we are grateful for this
voices also speak revenge
we want it
revenge is ours
God
not yours
let us kill
it's an eye for an eye ... yes
isn't this what the Holy Book says
it's legal by the State
we don't need to watch
but we will get revenge

how do we honor our beliefs
all are created by you
all hold your image and likeness
all hold the very life breath of God within
all are w-holy

our soul hurts
God
all we trusted about you
about life
about everything
is dead
how do we find life again

forgive us when we feel powerless and fall into hate
into name-calling
pulling us deeper into what society
family
friends
may tell us what is right and just
only to move us further away from bringing life
into darkness
and we come to believe that
killing someone to show that killing is wrong
satisfies revenge
and our names appear on the death certificate
sitting behind the signature of the governor,
in our name
our name now
is death

yet
this does not return life to those dead spaces inside us
instead
we made someone else hurt down to their soul
where life is seeking to find its way to birth
“an eye for an eye”
right
God

we feel

God
as if we wrestle
with

desire for revenge along
with the conviction of faith
do we betray the one killed if we don't kill
do we hold tight the memory of the one killed, or do we let them soar
do we do the unthinkable
and forgive the one who killed

we wrestle
and
in the end
like Job
we sit in ashes
until the soul is healed
recovering our w-holy-ness

and
God

we see you again
knowing you
again
deeply
speaking in gratitude
and living with renewed conviction of your presence with us
to delight in life again
to see beauty again
delighting that you have given all things life
both seen and unseen
the vast depths of the sky
to the very deep of the oceans
and the one who killed

all things are because your word spoke it into life and beauty.