

National Missing Children's Day Service Prayer

O Great God,

Known by many names and yet always beyond any single designation, felt as **one** by some and understood as **all** by others, be present with those of us gathered in this hour for the sacred acts of remembering, hoping, empowering, and recommitting.

We **remember** those who are missing from our lives, especially this day our missing children. We recall the names and faces of those known and unknown, those familiar to us and those a stranger to our family, those who have been gone a short time, and those long gone, but never forgotten. Help us in our lifting up to remind ourselves that all human beings are your children, and every person should be missed when they are absent. In almost all Holy Scriptures you claim the sacred worth of every individual, and you mourn when any child of yours wanders off, is abducted or kidnapped, is missing from their rightful place in our families and communities. We remember, O God.

We **hope** for safety for our missing loved ones. Sometimes feverishly, and sometimes patiently, but always faithfully we hope for their well-being wherever they may be and in whatever circumstances life may have taken them. Hope springs eternal, it is true, but after months, and sometimes, years of waiting, our hoping needs sustenance and support. Bring your passionate spirit to us, O God, so that we will never falter and the candles in our windows will never blow out.

We come seeking to **empower** the parents and loved ones of those missing to never, ever give up hope. We seek to empower ourselves and others to never be content with even one child missing or abducted, and to work to create a community where everyone is safe and secure in their own homes, on the streets, and at their schools, churches, playgrounds, and everywhere they may go.

We come to **recommit** ourselves, our families, our communities of faith to making our neighborhoods, our cities, our highways and byways safer for all. We recommit ourselves here, O God, to talk to our children about how they can be safe in this world and can honor you by respecting their bodies, their parents and caregivers, and the healthy boundaries you created in this world.

~ Rev. Allen V. Harris

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