

## **Affirmation of Faith**

By Carolyn Holderread Heggen

Group 1: We believe that beyond the violence,

Group 2: there can be love;

Group 1: That beyond the despair,

Group 2: there can be hope;

Group 1: That beyond the torment,

Group 2: we will find rest;

Group 1: That beyond our brokenness,

Group 2: there can be healing;

Group 1: That beyond our agony,

Group 2: we will find joy.

All: Oh, God, transform our disbelief and gently carry us from darkness to light.

By Carolyn Holderread Heggen, from Sexual Abuse in Christian Homes and Churches, and Churches by Carolyn Holderread Haggen, Hearld Press, Scottsdale, PA, 15683. Used by permission.

## **Confession I**

**Leader:** We confess that by our thoughts, words, and deeds, we have turned away from life; we have limited ourselves to meager life; we have chosen many small deaths.

**People:** Forgive us, Lord.

**Leader:** We confess that we have offered our sisters and brothers stones when they asked for bread; that we have looked away from the needy; that we have given death instead of life.

**People:** Forgive us, Lord.

**Leader:** We confess that we have not lived in the Source of Life; we have not believed in the Word of Life; we have not had the Spirit of Life.

**People:** Forgive us, Lord.

**Leader:** Jesus said, "Courage, your faith has made you whole. Go in peace and be healed." Again in other healing stories, Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven."

**People:** As our sin has been forgiven and we have been made whole, let us praise and celebrate that abundant life which was promised us, which we claim for our own and for the whole community of God's people.

Except from "A Celebration of Solidarity" by Mary Pellauer from *SEXUAL ASSAULT AND ABUSE: A HANDBOOK FOR CLERGY AND RELIGIOUS PROFESSIONALS*, EDITED by MARY D.

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## Confession II

### God of Love and Justice

God of love and justice,  
we long for peace within and peace without.  
We long for harmony in our families,  
for serenity in the midst of struggle.  
We long for the day when our homes  
will be a dwelling place for your love.

Yet we confess that we are often anxious;  
we do not trust each other,  
and we harbour violence.  
We are not willing to take the risks  
and make the sacrifices that love requires.

Look upon us with kindness and grace.  
Rule in our homes and in all the world;  
show us how to walk in your paths,  
through the mercy of our Savior. Amen.

Ruth C. Duke, "Peace and Family Life", adapted from *Flames of the Spirit* (New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1985), 45. Copyright © 1985 The Pilgrim Press.

## **Confession III**

### **Jesus, Model of Redemption**

By Elsie K. Neufeld

Jesus, Son of God, son of man and woman.  
You taught us well,  
you showed us how to live.  
And yet. And yet.  
We falter.  
Deny injustice, hurt instead of heal,  
use hands as weapons. Choose faithlessness  
instead of loyalty. Choose security instead of risk.  
Smile instead of weep. Choose indifference in the face of violence.  
Jesus, Son of God,  
Forgive us for we know not what we do.

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## **Prayer of Dedication**

**All:**

We offer ourselves to you, O God our Creator.

We offer our hands.

Use healing touch to comfort sisters, brothers and children who are afraid.

We offer our eyes and ears. May we see and hear the signs and stories of  
violence, so that all may have someone with them in their pain and  
confusion.

We offer our hearts and our tears as their hurt and sorrow echo within us.

We offer our own stories of violence.

May we be healed as we embrace each other.

We offer our anger. Make it a passion for justice.

We offer all our skills. Use our gifts to end violence.

We offer our faith, our hope, our love. May our encounters with violence  
bring us closer to you and to each other.

All this we ask through Jesus Christ who knows the pain of violence.  
AMEN.

Excerpted from the 1992 Women's Inter-church Council of Canada Worship Service and Rev. Carrie Doehring, in remembrance of the December 6, 1989 massacre of 14 women in Montreal.

## **Prayer for Victim**

**Response:** The Lord is my strength and my salvation.

Deliver me, O Lord, from evil men (**people**);  
preserve me from violent men (**people**),  
from those who devise evil in their hearts,  
and stir up wars every day.

Save me, O Lord, from the hands of the wicked;  
preserve me from violent men (**people**)  
Who plan to trip up my feet –  
the proud who have hidden a trap for me;  
They have spread cords for a net;  
by the wayside they have laid snares for me.

Grant not, O Lord, the desires of the wicked;  
further not their plans.  
Those who surround me lift up their heads;  
may the mischief which they threaten overwhelm them.

I know that the Lord renders  
justice to the afflicted, judgment to the poor.  
Surely the just shall give thanks to your name;  
the upright shall dwell in your presence.

**Response:** You, O Lord, are my refuge

**Response:** Into your hands I commend my spirit.

The prayer comes from the “Book of Blessings” (copyright © 1989 by the Order of St. Benedict, Inc, Collegeville, Minnesota. All right reserved)