

A Prayer after the Oklahoma City Bombing

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I am the building that was blown apart by a bomb in the “heartland” of America. My heart is blown open. The front of me falls away: I am the gaping floors, the broken glass, the dangling wires, the film of concrete dust that rises into the air.

This is my body.

I am the children who were killed: the little ones, the innocent, tender little people full of play and laughter. The babies.

This is my body.

I am the women and men who were killed, the mother, father, husband, wife, grandparent, neighbor, relative, friend, startled by death on an ordinary day.

This is my body.

I am those who mourn: the suddenly bereaved, the shocked, the bereft. I am the mother clutching a picture of her two children, the husband grieving his newlywed wife.

This is my body.

I am the rescue workers, the medical personnel, those who hope against hope, and those who are faithful even when there is no hope, those who press on into the rubble, searching for the living, the wounded, the dead, searching for what is human, for what is loved.

This is my body.

I am the ones who planned and planted the bomb: the hardhearted, the fearful, the numb and angry ones who no longer care. (When Timothy McVeigh is shown pictures of the dead, particularly dead children, he has no reaction at all. Says one source, “[There was] nothing. Zero reaction from that son of a bitch. This guy is a stone.”)

This is my body.

I am the ones who fill the airwaves with venom and hate. “Take them out in the desert and blow them up.” “Shoot ‘em.” “I hope they fry.”

This is my body.

I am the Holy Spirit, brooding over our bent world with bright wings. I am the wings of Jesus, tenderly outstretched above the city, sheltering everything and everyone beneath.

This is my body.

I cannot hold it all. I hand it to you, Jesus. Hold it with me.
And suddenly I see that I am handing you the cross: here, *you* carry it.
I cannot.

And he has taken it up. He is carrying all of this, all of this. The dead, the wounded, and those who mourn; the killers and those who were killed; the frightened, the angry, the sorrowful--he is carrying all of this, all of us, every part of us, into the loving heart of God.



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