



Cherish All Children

Pray + Educate + Connect + Act

Wednesday Prayer – 3rd Sunday after Epiphany

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. I Corinthians 12:12

We were all so happy to hear that Jayme Closs escape the man who killed her parents, kidnapped her and held her against her will for 88 days. The horrible circumstances of her abduction made this a very high-profile case, not just in Wisconsin or the Midwest, but around the world. The details of her time with her abductor are slow to come, but clearly added to her trauma. The news of her safety and freedom resulted in well wishes from thousands of strangers, as well as encouragement from another high-profile survivor, Elizabeth Smart, who was abducted at age 14 and held for 9 months. She advised Jayme not to let anyone blame her for not acting sooner as some do either intentionally or unintentionally. Only those who have experienced this trauma understand the effects of weeks and months of intense fear and threats on one's ability to act.

The high-profile nature of these two teens' recovery brings awareness and a sense of hope on a topic that often feels hopeless. Unlike Jayme and Elizabeth, most are not dramatically abducted by strangers, but often are groomed and lured into exploitation by "trusted" adults. Unfortunately, there are thousands more who are still in the hands of those who are exploiting them, and their situations go unnoticed. These are all beloved members of the body of Christ. We have to be careful not to question or blame, but to hold them in prayer, educate ourselves and others about human trafficking, and advocate for changes in our laws and practices to make a safer world.

While we may not fully know what they've experienced, we know that it causes intense pain and on-going effects that will take a long time to heal. When one member is hurt, the body is hurt. Be strengthened by the hope that these and other survivors bring, and persevere in ending trafficking and support the healing of the pain that it causes.

Gracious God, we give thanks and praise that Jayme, Elizabeth and others are safe from those who harmed them. Bring hope to those who continue to feel hopelessly caught in the mire of human trafficking. Strengthen each of us to be your hands in the world and to reach out in understanding and healing to all who hurt until the entire body is healthy and safe. Amen.

Today's Wednesday Prayer was written by Kay Kinkel, MA,MSW, formerly rostered as an Associate in Ministry in the ELCA, and now a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker.