



PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

## Memorial Day

God of grace and Lord of glory, we come before you on a Memorial Day remembering loss.

Some think of it as a nation's loss. But for those who miss a fallen son or daughter, a parent or a spouse, or a battle buddy, Memorial Day is personal. It's a reminder of painful personal loss.

Small American flags flutter next to graves this weekend. Their markers may carry, not only a name, but a military rank. Some of them read, "General" or "Admiral." But there are plenty with the label "Seaman" or "Private" and every rank in between.

War is no respecter of rank. Nor does it care if loved ones shed tears over gravestones long after the war is over.

War does not care.

But you do, compassionate Father.

Some flags hang next to graves marked, "Known but to God." Their loved ones have no place to bring flowers of remembrance. No stone to weep over.

Yet, there is comfort in knowing that you know each one of them, Father. You marked the place where they fell. You watched the grave being dug or the casket slipping into the sea. You knew their name before their parents thought of it. You remember it still.

You loved them with a sacrificial love. You gave up your Son for them. His body once lay in a grave, too. You know the pain of loss.

But in your loss, you gained for us the answer to loss. Those who lose this life trusting in you gain an everlasting life in glory.

Your Son, Jesus, laid down his life that those who love him may overcome our nation's greatest enemy: Death.

Eternal Father, strong to save, bring your healing to our America. Stretch out your hand to shield our nation from harm. Bring peace to our shores and love to our hearts.

Bring your strength to our weakness and your peace to our pain.

When we feel loss, let us remember you. Amen.