

Dear Lord,

It feels so hard to find the words to express the sadness and grief felt amongst our military families as we pull out of Afghanistan after 20 years. 20 years of war, of deployments, of bridges built and then torn down, of sorrowful goodbyes and homecomings, of making the ultimate sacrifice in service of a greater purpose.

The grief can feel consuming, and the thought and worry for the lives left behind is overbearing. I come to you, Lord filled with this heaviness, this aching heart for our service members, our military families, our humanitarian aid providers, our Afghan counterparts, and the millions of lives that will forever be changed by this war and the events of the week.

I pray for the 13 service members lost this week, Lord. I pray for their families and loved ones as they find ways to move forward in a world that feels a little emptier.

I pray for all those injured in this week's bombing. For those recovering in Walter Reed and abroad.

I pray for the service members, those who have returned and those who haven't. Those who have deployed multiple times in service of one country hoping to impact another. Those who will forever carry the wounds both seen and unseen from this years long war.

I pray for the military spouses and families, our caretakers. I pray you give them strength as they rally their communities on the home-front preparing to care for not only their own, but for the refugees arriving in our nation in search of safety, stability, and the hope of a better future.

I pray for all those continuing their work to prepare safe ways for Afghans; for Afghans making difficult and life altering decisions in the coming days and months; for all those preparing to receive and welcome Afghans to new, strange lands; and for the planes still grounded-may they find a way to swiftly take off.

Lastly Lord, I pray for our two nations and our world. I pray for kindness, compassion, and understanding. I pray for the light in each of us to outshine the darkness of these days as we continue to move through a world that looks vastly different from the one we left behind yesterday.

Amen.