One-by-One: A Prayer as the COVID Death Toll Mounts
By Alden Solovy

God of consolation,
Surely you count in heaven,
Just as we count here on earth,
In shock and in sorrow,
The souls sent back to You,
One-by-one,
The dead from the COVID pandemic,
As the ones become tens,
The tens become hundreds,
The hundreds become thousands,
The thousands become ten-thousands
And then hundred-thousands,
Each soul, a heartbreak,
Each soul, a life denied.

God of wisdom,
Surely in the halls of divine justice
You are assembling the courts,
Calling witnesses to testify,
To proclaim
The compassion of some
And the callousness of others
As we’ve struggled to cope.
The souls taken too soon,
Whose funerals were lonely,
Who didn’t need to die,
Who died alone,
Will tell their stories
When You judge
Our triumphs
And our failures
In these hours of need.

God of healing,
Put an end to this pandemic,
And all illness and disease.
Bless those who stand in service to humanity.
Bless those who grieve.
Bless the dead,
So that their souls are bound up in the bond of life eternal.
And grant those still afflicted
With disease or trauma
A completed and lasting healing,
One-by-one,
Until suffering ceases,
And we can stop counting the dead,
In heaven
And on earth.