

READING FOR CANDLELIGHT VIGILS "THE FIVE CANDLES"

The concept of four candles originated from the "Grandparents Holiday Wreath of Love" used by Grandparents Count in New Jersey (USA). As a tribute to each of us joining together all over the world in "A Moment in our Hearts, A Moment of Solidarity" we light our candles to unite our voices and focus on the reasons we are here and the message we are sending.

As we light these five candles in honor of our families and our children, we light one for our grief, one for our courage, one for our memories, one for our love. Our ceremony includes the addition of a fifth candle, a candle for justice.

This first candle represents our grief. The pain of not having our children in our lives is intense. It reminds us constantly of the depth of our love for you.

This second candle represents our courage to confront our sorrow, to comfort each other, and know that our children are in our hearts always.

This third candle we light in your memory, for all the times we think about our children, the times we have had or would like to have had with you, knowing you will be with us in our memories always.

This fourth candle represents the light of love. As we start each day, day by day, we cherish the special place in our hearts that will always be reserved for our children.

This fifth candle represents justice. We are parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and stepfamilies. We raise our voices to send the message from our hearts of what we feel in our souls: that we cherish our families more than anything. Our families are our inspiration. Our heritage is the right of all families to exist and function as a family and the right to protection from the hardship of unaffordable financial support orders and penalties which are unjustly imposed. Our vision advocates that the right to share the responsibility for meeting all our children's needs equally and within our means--and the right of of all family members to maintain their family bonds--must be recognized and protected as civil and human rights. We ask tonight that this inspiration, heritage and vision of justice be embraced by society, our lawmakers and our legal system to create a true justice system, a system that will provide guidance, protection and refuge to all family members in crisis, a system that will apply a standard of compassion, problem-solving and reasonableness, and a system that will maintain a constant vigilance to seek the truth and administer orders that will protect the civil rights and rebuild the lives of all family members.