

For an End to the Death Penalty



We pray to the Lord

Office of Life, Justice & Peace, Diocese of Orange

For an End to the Death Penalty, we pray to the Lord:

For the repose of the souls of all those who have been executed in this country and all the loved ones left bereaved by their execution. No souls are more in need of God's mercy than these...

For the repose of the souls of those who died at the hands of another and the comfort of their stricken loved ones. Their lives were torn apart by the senseless violence of another, and their need for God's healing is great...

For victims of violence who have not yet been given the grace of forgiveness or the peace that passes understanding, individuals who find themselves still feeding upon rage, vengeance and grief. Only God can move them from death into life, and we pray for their peace...

For all of the some 2,830 men and women currently on death row in the United States, including 747 in California, and for their families and loved ones. They are living an existence of great suffering, suspended between life and death, reviled by the public and forgotten by nearly everyone; we pray for some measure of compassion and hope...

For the innocent who were wrongly convicted and executed. As of October 20, 2017, 1,463 people had been executed by capital punishment (since 1976, when the death penalty was ruled permissible by the U.S. Supreme Court). During that same time, 160 individuals in 26 states have been released from death row in this country due to prosecutorial or law-enforcement misconduct, poor legal representation and mistaken identification; we pray for their restoration to wholeness, in this life or in the next...

For the guilty who have been justly convicted but who have not come to a place of contrition about their violence, men and women who might indeed die before they appreciate the harm they have done and make amends and restitution for the lives they took; we pray for their conversion to a way of nonviolence in their own lives...

For the men and women in law enforcement, especially prison staff, who do a difficult and often thankless job on behalf of us all; we pray for their conversion to a way of nonviolence, and for their strength and protection...

For elected officials who make laws, that they might come to find ways of truly guaranteeing the inalienable right to life as set forth in the Declaration of Independence, even for those guilty of truly heinous acts; we pray for moral courage and wisdom...

For the governors of our states with the death penalty, particularly those who are members of the Roman Catholic Church. These men and women must directly or indirectly approve every single death warrant, knowing that a fellow citizen and human being will be killed by their formal signature or their lack of intervention, thereby taking upon themselves some serious measure of the moral burden for another's death. we pray that they might use their executive powers to save lives rather than end them...

For all those engaged in the public debate in the church and in society around the death penalty, that they might pursue justice in a truly compassionate, charitable fashion and find a way to discuss and act without resorting to verbal or physical violence themselves...

For the conversion of all of our hearts to the way of Gospel nonviolence, for a respect for the life and dignity of every person, and for an end to the death penalty, we pray to the Lord...

Lord, hear our prayer.

*Adapted from Hopke,
Catholics and the Death Penalty: Six Things You Can Do to End Capital Punishment*