

A PRAYER TO END THE DEATH PENALTY

by Kathie Uhler, OSF

O Jesus, you forgave the Good Thief from your cross,
at your own execution.

You exonerated the woman caught in adultery,
because no one was without guilt.

You wept with his sisters at the loss of Lazarus.

You wept over Jerusalem, over the blindness of the people
to your Father's mercy.



O Jesus, you taught us to transcend racism,
like the Good Samaritan.

You showed us the unconditional love and forgiveness
of the Father to his Prodigal Son;

and the heavenly way of extreme benevolence as
the sun shines equally on the good and the bad,
and when the last and least were rewarded
as the first and the best.



Help us to learn your ways, O Jesus, of ceaseless forgiving
and boundless mercy and trust

of our brothers and sisters,

especially those convicted of capital crimes.

Help us to take up the cross of unconditional love
each day, with you, O Jesus, along the hallways
and streets and rows of our lives. Amen.

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What Catholics should know about the death penalty:

Scripture:

- ♦ **Genesis 2:7, 21-23** – Every life is precious, a gift from God.
- ♦ **Exodus 21: 23-25** – “Eye for eye” meant to limit retribution, not to require a minimum punishment.
- ♦ **Romans: 12:17** – “Do not repay injury with injury.”

Catholic Teaching:

- ♦ **Pope John Paul II:** “I renew the appeal...to end the death penalty, which is both cruel and unnecessary.” *St. Louis, MO, Jan. 27, 1999*
- ♦ **Pope Benedict XVI:** “...I draw the attention of society’s leaders to the need to make every effort to eliminate the death penalty and to reform the penal system....” *Benin, Nov. 19, 2011*
- ♦ **United States Catholic Bishops:** “Ending the death penalty would be one important step away from a culture of death and toward building a culture of life.” *A Culture of Life and the Penalty of Death, 2005.*

Some Facts:

- ♦ Blacks are 13% of U.S. population but 42% of death row inmates.
- ♦ Over 90% on death row could not afford their own attorney.
- ♦ There were 43 U.S. executions in 2011, a 56% decline since 1999.
- ♦ Among Catholics only 48% support death penalty; churchgoers and younger Catholics are less likely to support it. *Zogby Int’l 2006 Poll.*

Resources:

- ♦ Catholic Mobilizing Network to End the Use of the Death Penalty (CMN): www.catholicismobilizing.org; Contact: 202-541-5290.
- ♦ U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops <http://www.usccb.org/deathpenalty>
- ♦ Death Penalty Information Center – (DPIC) www.deathpenaltyinfo.org

This prayer card is a publication of Catholics Mobilizing Network to End the Use of the Death Penalty (CMN). ☩ † ☩

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