



A Novena to End the Death Penalty

*In Anticipation of World Day Against the Death Penalty
(October 10)*

DAY 1

Opening Prayer

O God, you envision for us a justice that emulates your mercy and healing. But we have fallen short, too often choosing retribution over repair and relationship. Guide us in our work to abolish the death penalty. Through your grace, may we discard this violent practice which falls short of your perfect vision, and create in its place a justice that honors the human dignity of all.

Daily Intention

For those who have been executed, their lives deemed unworthy by the state, Lord we pray, have mercy. Open our eyes to the inherent dignity of all people, regardless of the harm they have suffered or caused.

A Prayer for Justice by Sr. Helen Prejean, CSJ

God of Compassion, You let your rain fall on the just and the unjust. Expand and deepen our hearts so that we may love as You love, even those among us who have caused the greatest pain by taking life. For there is in our land a great cry for vengeance as we fill up death row and kill the killers in the name of justice, in the name of peace. Jesus, our brother, you suffered execution at the hands of the state but you did not let hatred overcome you. Help us to reach out to victims of violence so that our enduring love may help them heal. Holy Spirit of God, You strengthen us in the struggle for justice. Help us to work tirelessly for the abolition of state-sanctioned death and to renew our society in its very heart so that violence will be no more.

Our Father...

Hail Mary...

Executed Christ, have mercy on us.

Amen.

DAY 2

Opening Prayer

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Daily Intention

For victims of violence and their families, whose dignity has been violated, Lord we pray, have mercy. Open our ears to hear their needs, and help us to support them in their journeys towards healing.

A Prayer for Justice by Sr. Helen Prejean, CSJ

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DAY 3

Opening Prayer

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Daily Intention

For those on death row, whose lives have been reduced to the worst things they've ever done, and all who love them, who live with fear of their execution, Lord we pray, have mercy. Open our hearts to their cries for mercy.

A Prayer for Justice by Sr. Helen Prejean, CSJ

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Daily Intention

For those who work in prisons and are tasked with killing in the name of the state, Lord we pray, have mercy. Harden not their hearts, and allow them to see your divine goodness in each person on death row.

A Prayer for Justice by Sr. Helen Prejean, CSJ

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Daily Intention

For communities that are disproportionately affected by capital punishment – including people of color, people experiencing poverty, and people with childhood trauma, intellectual disability, or mental illness – Lord we pray, have mercy. Open our minds to just solutions that break cycles of harm, rather than perpetuate them.

A Prayer for Justice by Sr. Helen Prejean, CSJ

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DAY 6

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Daily Intention

For judges, juries, parole boards, and others in positions of power who make life-or-death decisions, Lord we pray, have mercy. Open their hearts to your mercy, even amid a system that demands vengeance.

A Prayer for Justice by Sr. Helen Prejean, CSJ

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Daily Intention

For those on death row who are innocent, convicted of crimes they did not commit, Lord we pray, have mercy. Open our eyes to see the irreparable imperfections of this “justice” system we’ve designed.

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Daily Intention

For elected officials who have the power to reform our criminal legal system, Lord we pray, have mercy. Open their ears to their constituents imploring them to “stop killing in our names!”

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Daily Intention

For all people of goodwill, including each of us who advocates for an end to the death penalty, Lord we pray, have mercy. Grant us the strength to continue proclaiming a justice rooted in the dignity of all life, until the death penalty is no more.

A Prayer for Justice by Sr. Helen Prejean, CSJ

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