

Choosing Mercy Vigil



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Catholic Mobilizing Network

Praying Together to
Abolish the Death Penalty



LEADER:

Let us pray together the words written by Sr. Helen Prejean, CSJ, *A prayer to abolish the death penalty.*

God of compassion, you let your rain fall on the just and 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 rows 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.

Amen.

ANTIPHON: God is my comforter and help in time of need.

PSALM 23 THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

Lord, you are my shepherd; I shall not want.

In verdant pastures you give me repose.
Beside restful waters you lead me;

You refresh my soul.
You guide me in right paths
for your name's sake.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Jesus, you came with a message of love and forgiveness. Your love is stronger than death; have mercy on those on death row and give strength, patience and courage to all who are imprisoned. Give courage and peace to all victims of violence. Have mercy on us that we may accept courageously the challenge of following you: seeking the healing powers of forgiveness and reconciliation and offering compassion to those who are suffering. **Amen.**

HYMN: LET THERE BE PEACE ON EARTH

Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me;
Let there be peace on earth,
The peace that was meant to be.
With God as our Father
Neighbors all are we.
Let us walk with each other
In perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me,
Let this be the moment now.
With every step I take,
Let this be my solemn vow;
To take each moment and live each moment
In peace eternally.
Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me.

Even though I walk in the dark valley
I fear no evil;
for you are at my side.

Your rod and your staff give me courage.
You spread the table before me
in the sight of my foes.

You anoint my head with oil;
my cup brims over.

Only goodness and kindness follow me
all the days of my life;

and I shall dwell in your house
for years to come.

ANTIPHON: God is my comforter and help in time of need.

READING from scripture: John 11:21-27

Martha said to Jesus, "Lord if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

PERIOD OF SILENCE

INTERCESSIONS:

- Christ Jesus, you humbled yourself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. You were taken prisoner in the darkness of night and you suffered the humiliation of a captured criminal. You showed us the depths of your love for us by your life and death so we pray. . . **O God, hear our prayer.**
- God of Compassion, we pray for the victims of crime and their families (name each one and sound the bell). May your healing presence transform their pain and anger in ways never thought possible, we pray. . . **O God, hear our prayer.**
- God of Compassion, we stand before you as members of a society in need of your healing. We ask that your compassion be poured out on all who are scheduled for execution during this month (name each and sound the bell), we pray . . . **O God, hear our prayer.**
- God of Compassion, we pray for those who participate in all executions done in our name. May they, and we, be open to ways you minister grace and conversion in the least likely places, we pray. . . **O God, hear our prayer.**
- God of Compassion, for peace and reconciliation in our lives, in our society and in our world we pray. . . **O God, hear our prayer.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER