



CATHOLIC MOBILIZING NETWORK

END THE DEATH PENALTY • ADVANCE JUSTICE • BEGIN HEALING

November 20, 2024

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write to you as fellow Catholics and on behalf of Catholic Mobilizing Network (CMN), the national network of Catholics and people of goodwill working to end the death penalty, advance justice, and begin healing. CMN's network of more than 30,000 advocates includes Catholic bishops, dioceses, state Catholic conferences, religious communities, members of the laity, and others from across the nation.

As we approach the historic Jubilee Year of 2025, a time when the Holy Father Pope Francis has called for "forgiveness, reconciliation, and an end to every form of death penalty," we ask you to act in the spirit of mercy and the kind of justice that upholds the dignity of all life, no matter the harm one has caused or suffered, **to commute the sentences of all 40 men currently on federal death row.**

During your presidential campaign, you opposed the death penalty, notably following the federal execution spree carried out under the Trump administration that came after a 17-year hiatus. CMN held national prayer vigils for each person executed in 2020-2021; your execution moratorium was an act of courage and justice. Yet we know that this alone cannot guarantee the protection of those on death row, nor does it prevent future administrations from resuming executions.

As a matter of faith and moral conviction, Catholic Mobilizing Network seeks an end to the death penalty in the United States. At this time, real advances can be made to save the lives of those on the federal death row. We know that the federal death row, just as in the states, is marred by significant arbitrariness, including racial bias and the imposition on vulnerable individuals such as those with intellectual disability, brain damage, and serious mental illness. There is also a risk that innocent people will be put to death. It is because of our moral conviction along with these practical reasons that we urge you to use your authority to commute the federal death row before leaving office.

As Catholics, we understand that every person is made in the image of God and that our Heavenly Father does not shut the door on anyone. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states unequivocally that "the Church teaches, in the light of the Gospel, that 'the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person,' and she works with determination for its abolition worldwide." (2267)

By commuting these sentences, you could use your constitutional authority in a way that would mirror the spirit of reconciliation during this special Jubilee 2025 year. Indeed, your commutation of the entire federal row would be a tangible expression of your commitment to end the federal death penalty.

In the remaining weeks of your presidency, you no doubt have many weighty matters to consider. We trust that you will give this request your full attention, as we all strive to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.

With hope in Christ that does not disappoint,

Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy
Executive Director
Catholic Mobilizing Network

Sr. Rita Ann Teichman, CSJ
Chair, Board of Directors
Catholic Mobilizing Network