



STEWARDS OF OUR EARTH All of God's Creation

Social Justice Committee, Holy Cross Parish, Mt. Airy, December 1, 2024

Preparing the way for a Jubilee Year of Hope: End the Death Penalty

“Every 25 years, the Catholic Church recognizes a special year to proclaim liberty to captives, recovery of sight to the blind, and letting the oppressed go free. A year that proclaims liberation, conversion, and reconciliation to mark a time to re-establish a proper relationship with God.... Pope Francis announced Jubilee 2025 in a letter, entitled *Hope Does Not Disappoint*. The Holy Father illuminates the power of hope, especially in challenging times, and he calls on each of us to take action to restore hope in our world.... Boldly and clearly, **Pope Francis names the abolition of the death penalty as one such tangible expression of hope....**

There are currently 40 men on the federal death row [at the federal death house in Terre Haute, Indiana], **and President Biden has the constitutional authority to literally save their lives before he leaves office.** This action would demonstrate a commitment to upholding the dignity of all human life.” (Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy, Executive Director, *Catholic Mobilizing Network*, 11/16/24) By commuting these death sentences, President Biden ensures not one of them is executed. With a special jubilee action, [take this opportunity to urge President Biden to commute the federal death row.](#)

“The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the person is at the core of a moral vision for society. **Our belief in the sanctity of human life and the inherent dignity of the human person is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching.**” (*Catholic Charities Office for Social Justice*)

In 2018, Pope Francis ordered a change in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the official compendium of church teaching, when he termed the death penalty “inadmissible.” In his encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, the pope placed the full weight of his teaching authority behind this statement: **The death penalty is inadmissible, and Catholics should work for its abolition worldwide.** A papal encyclical is one of the highest of all documents in terms of its authority, removing any lingering doubt about the church’s belief (James Martin, *America*, October 4, 2020).

“*There is no fitting punishment without hope! Punishment for its own sake, without room for hope, is a form of torture, not of punishment.*” (Pope Francis Message to 6th World Congress Against the Death Penalty, June 22, 2016)



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