



SANT'EGIDIO

Stop the Executions!

The Community of Sant'Egidio deplores the rapid executions of seven people by the US federal government in the last three months. [Together with the US Catholic Bishops](#), we call for a moratorium of the US federal death penalty. We call for an end to the death penalty in all the US states where it is still practiced. And we urge all people of goodwill to raise their voices in prayer and protest against these unconscionable acts undertaken in the name of all Americans. Stop the executions!

After a 17-year hiatus—with public attention focused on the Covid crisis—President Donald Trump and Attorney General William Barr ordered the shockingly rapid executions of seven people from July to September of this year: Daniel Lewis Lee (July 14), Wesley Purkey (July 16), Dustin Lee Honken (July 16), Lezmond Mitchell (August 26), Keith Dwayne Nelson (August 28), William Le Croy Jr. (September 22) and Christopher Vialva (September 24).

There now have been more federal executions carried out in 2020 than in the past 57 years combined—a deplorable affront to the dignity of human life which flies in the face of the global movement to end the death penalty and the majority of Americans who now believe the death penalty is not applied fairly and is disproportionately applied to racial minorities. Many medical authorities also contend that the use of chemical lethal injection in executions causes a tortuous death, which violates the U.S. Constitution's prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment. Fifty-six people remain on death row at the US Federal Penitentiary in Terre Haute, Indiana and [around 2500 people sit on death rows in states across the country](#). The next execution, of Orlando Hall, is scheduled for November 19.

The Community of Sant'Egidio stands in solidarity with all those condemned to death, all victims of violent crime and their loved ones and abolitionist organizations such as the Catholic Mobilizing Network, Death Penalty Action, Journey of Hope, and Amnesty International which boldly and truthfully proclaims, that the “death penalty is a symptom of a culture of violence, not a solution to it.” We call all people of goodwill to take action through persistent petition to public officials, peaceful protest, public witness and prayer. We call on Catholics in particular [to sign the Catholic Mobilizing Network's urgent petition to stop the planned November 19 execution of Orlando Hall](#).

As members of the Church and people of goodwill, we must give concrete help to victims of violence, and we must encourage the rehabilitation and restoration of those who commit violence. Accountability and legitimate punishment are a part of this process. Responsibility for harm is necessary if healing is to occur and can be instrumental in protecting society, but executions are completely unnecessary and unacceptable, as Popes St. John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis have all articulated. 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 works with determination for its abolition worldwide. Recognizing this emerging worldwide consensus, Pope Francis revised the very catechism of the Catholic Church to declare the death penalty “inadmissible,” reiterating this firmly again in his most recent encyclical [“Fratelli Tutti.”](#)



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Therefore, we say to President Trump and Attorney General Barr: Stop these executions!

The Community of Sant'Egidio is a leader of the movement for an end to the death penalty worldwide. For more information: <https://nodeathpenalty.santegidio.org>

*See the Catholic Mobilizing Network's resource page to take action:
<https://catholicmobilizing.org/action>*

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