



## Pray, Study, Act

### Action Steps in Support of Road to Repeal, 2014

#### Pray

- (1) Individuals might include a prayer from those in the worship materials as part of a daily prayer time.
- (2) A church might choose to include a prayer from those in the worship materials as part of their services each Sunday during the 2014 legislative session.
- (3) The Campaign Manager for the Road to Repeal Campaign has asked that small prayer groups be formed in individual churches that might take just a few minutes before or after services to gather in a quiet space and pray that the hearts of representatives and senators be open and discerning as the death penalty is discussed in the legislature.

#### Study

### Three Pieces for Reflection and Discussion

Thirty years ago in Paris I once saw how, in the presence of thousands of spectators, they cut a man's head off with a guillotine. I knew that the man was a dreadful criminal: I knew all the arguments that have been written in defence of that kind of action, and I knew it was done deliberately and intentionally, but at the moment the head and body separated and fell into the box I gasped, and realized not with my mind nor with my heart but with my whole being, that all the arguments in defence of capital punishment are wicked nonsense, and that however many people may combine to commit murder---the worst of all crimes---and whatever they may call themselves, murder remains murder,

and that this crime had been committed before my eyes, and I by my presence and non-intervention had approved and shared in it.

Leo Tolstoy, from  
What Then Must We Do?, 1886

(NOTE: Defence is translated with a c, which is permissible.)

"The Anointing" by Kenneth Foster, Jr. who is now serving life in prison was on death row in Texas when Bishop Desmond Tutu visited Dominique Green, a death row inmate who was executed on October 26, 2004. Dominique Green had read Tutu's book, No Future Without Forgiveness.

Three cheers for Tutu,  
the Catholic Zulu,  
our black pope,  
who smiled on Death Row  
and left tears as  
spiritual libation  
for dried souls to grow on.  
Go on wit' yo' bad self, Desmond,  
testing the morals of South Africa and  
the dirty south,  
trekking through the paths of  
Black Death,  
breathing  
Green Life  
for all willing  
to be blessed with a  
Holy Kiss  
by lips that know how to speak a  
Peace Beyond Understanding.  
We stood hand in hand with you,  
and still do,  
hoping to remain the prayer in your heart  
that asks forgiveness for our souls  
in a land of barren mercy,  
bearing our crosses,  
buried in the steel of  
Texas Death Row.

"The Worst You've Ever Done, a song by Charlie King on his CD, Puppet Town.

Ever say a stupid thing?  
Wrong place, wrong crowd, wrong day?  
Ever long to take it back?  
To make it go away?  
Now, dig a little deeper,  
Beneath the scab of shame.  
Something you pray you've never done,  
Something you dare not name.

❖ Imagine being stuck right there  
For all of time and tide.  
And all the good, you did, or could  
Forgotten and denied.  
By some strand you can't untangle  
From the winding web you've spun.  
To only be remembered  
For the worst you've ever done.

❖ Maybe you betrayed a friend.  
Perhaps you hurt a child.  
Or won some heart and broke it,  
Just to watch that heart go wild.  
You might have done it on a whim  
You might have in a rage  
You might have done it in a war  
Or done it for a wage.

❖ Imagine being stuck right there  
For all of time to come.

To only be remembered  
For the worst you've ever done.

Well, you out live the wrong you've done  
And now you're living well.  
But some live by the hour  
In a solitary cell.  
Wait for the warden, wait for the noose,  
Wait for the morning sun.  
Smoldering embers, only remembered  
For the worst they've ever done.

❖ Who will sit in judgment?  
And who will stand alone?  
Who can know another's heart?  
Who can cast the stone?  
Where is the healing?  
In the vengeance that we crave?  
Where are the flowers?  
For a barren, unmarked grave?

❖ Out of his mouth, a red, red rose  
Out of his heart, a white.  
For the life he can never live over,  
For the good he did, or might.

❖ Imagine being stuck right there  
For all of time to come.  
A smoldering ember, only remembered  
For the worst you've ever done. 2x

**Two Curricula** (These may be obtained from Marti Hunt, mahunt@tds.net or 927-4046):

(1) “Living and Dying According to the Voice of Faith: Thinking about the Death Penalty” (Created by representatives of seven faith communities of the New Mexico Conference of Churches)

St. Stephen’s Church, Pittsfield has used this curriculum for a Lenten Study.

(2) “A Death Penalty Curriculum” by Jeffrey Spencer, an UCC pastor

## The Bible

Hebrew Scripture

Exodus 20: 13

Deut. 30: 19-20

Isaiah 32: 16-18

Hebrew and New Testament

Leviticus 24: 13-24 and Matthew 5: 17-24, 38-48

New Testament

Matthew 18: 21-22

Luke 11: 4

Luke 6: 27-38

John 8: 3-11

Romans 12: 17-21

Colossians 3:12-17

## Secular Fact Sheets

Any of the fact sheets included on the website might be a source of reflection.

Books and Films (Marti Hunt has read or viewed these resources unless indicated.)

## Books

Amish Grace How Forgiveness Transcended Tragedy by Kraybill, Nolt, and Weaver-Zercher

The Biblical Truth about America's Death Penalty by Dale S. Recinella (Marti has not read through. Have just used as a resource at this point.)

Dead Man Walking by Sister Helen Prejean

The Death of Innocents An Eyewitness Account of Wrongful Executions by Sister Helen Prejean

Exile and Embrace Contemporary Religious Discourse on the Death Penalty by Antony Santoro (Has just been published, 2013. Marti just purchased.)

The New Jim Crow Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness by Michelle Alexander (Highly recommended by friends working with minorities or death row inmates. Marti just purchased.)

Peculiar Institution America's Death Penalty in an Age of Abolition by David Garland (This is a very dense sociological study, but Chapter Six "State and Society in America" is well worth the effort.)

The Ride A Shocking Murder and a Bereaved Father's Journey from Rage to Redemption by Brian Macquarrie

A Saint on Death Row The Story of Dominique Green by Thomas Cahill

Too Politically Sensitive by Michale Calahan (Marti has not read yet. It is partially the story of Randy Steidl, an exonerated death row inmate. Book is of interest as Randy testified in NH before the NH Death Penalty Study Commission.)

## Films

Amish Grace (I have not seen. It is a fictionalized account made for TV movie.)

At the Death House Door

Conviction

The Empty Chair Death Penalty Yes or No

The Oxbow Incident

70 X 7 The Forgiveness Equation

Act

(1) Sign the Faith Initiative's Sign On Letter included in the clergy packet indicating your opposition to the death penalty and return to Marti Hunt at P.O. Box 170 New London, NH 03257

(2) To determine your legislative representatives. Go to this website and then click on House Representatives or Senators

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/>

It is not too soon to contact your representative and senator and let them know your position on the death penalty and to ask them for their position.

(3) Get involved with local area groups working for death penalty repeal.

(a) The Monadnock Citizens Concerned About the Death Penalty

This group is active in the Keene area. To become involved contact John-Michael Dumais, state campaign director or Bridget Hansel, secretary of MCCADP and member of St. James, Keene

Contact: [jmdumais@nodeathpenaltynh.org](mailto:jmdumais@nodeathpenaltynh.org)

[pdhansel@myfairpoint.net](mailto:pdhansel@myfairpoint.net)

(b) The Manchester Organizing Group

This group is active in the greater Manchester area. To become involved contact John-Michael Dumais, state campaign director or the Reverend Dan Ferry, who is chair of the steering committee of this group.

Contact: [jmdumais@nodeathpenaltynh.org](mailto:jmdumais@nodeathpenaltynh.org)  
[ferrydw@aol.com](mailto:ferrydw@aol.com)

(c) The Seacoast Organizing Group

This group is active in the greater Seacoast area. To become involved contact John-Michael Dumais, state campaign director or Ray Bilodeau, community organizer.

Contact: [jmdumais@nodeathpenaltynh.org](mailto:jmdumais@nodeathpenaltynh.org)  
[rbilodeau@nodeathpenaltynh.org](mailto:rbilodeau@nodeathpenaltynh.org)

(4) Become involved with activities of the Faith Initiative of the NH Coalition. To become involved contact Ray Bilodeau, community organizer, or Marti Hunt, one of the diocesan representatives to the Coalition.

Contact: [rbilodeau@nodeathpenaltynh.org](mailto:rbilodeau@nodeathpenaltynh.org)  
[mahunt@tds.net](mailto:mahunt@tds.net)

(5) Write a letter to your local newspaper expressing your support of death penalty repeal legislation. Check the Coalition website for help writing the letter.

(6) Organize a prayer or study group at your church.

(7) Make a personal donation or ask your church to make a donation to the NH Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty to support repeal work. Donations to the 501 c 3 organization are tax deductible. Donations to the 501 c 4, which support more direct lobbying, are not tax deductible, but needed.

(8) To find out information about the New Hampshire Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty

<http://www.nodeathpenaltynh.org/>

This website includes additional action steps and links to other informational websites. You may join the Coalition at the website at no cost. This is a good way to stay informed about the repeal bill as it moves through the legislature.

(4) To ask questions, gain help finding curriculum materials or other information, contact Martha A. (Marti) Hunt, one of your diocesan representatives to the Coalition

[mahunt@tds.net](mailto:mahunt@tds.net)

Pray, Study, Act Materials prepared by Marti Hunt, SCHC