



And Solitary Confinement is Torture



Torture Awareness Month : June 2015

Every June, human rights and faith organizations join together to mark Torture Awareness Month because on June 26, 1987, the nations of the world took a major step against the immoral and abhorrent practice of torture. On that day, the Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT for short) entered into force, and the United Nations later declared June 26th the "International Day in Support of Victims of Torture." The Convention was signed by the U.S. in 1988 and ratified by the U.S. Senate in 1994, thereby becoming U.S. law. The Convention also prohibits cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment which does not amount to torture.

Since 9/11, torture has become an acceptable part of American culture. We want to turn this tide. We must confront the culture of torture, and we must end prolonged solitary confinement in U.S. prisons for the following reasons:

- Torture is immoral. It runs contrary to the teachings of all religions and dishonors all faiths. It is an egregious violation of the dignity and worth of every human being – both the torturer and the tortured.
- Torture is illegal and counterproductive. It causes profound and lasting harm, especially to its victims but also to its perpetrators. It contradicts our nation's deepest values and corrupts the moral fabric of our society.
- Our faith teaches us the importance of treating all people with human dignity. Our government must follow that precept as well. Torture is always wrong. It is immoral to torture anyone – whether that individual is suspected of having done something bad or not.

Together with The National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT), we invite you to join people of faith throughout the world in commemorating Torture Awareness Month.

Activities You Are Invited To Support

View A Film:

The Thomas Merton Center is playing the NRCAT film "Solitary Confinement in your back yard" this Sunday following the 8:45 a.m. Mass in the Thomas House basement. (The film was made by NRCAT, the National Religious Campaign Against Torture, of which our parish is a member and we have supported since 2008).

We encourage you to view it online. You can see it at:

<http://www.nrcat.org/torture-in-us-prisons/show-the-film>

(See Over)

Sign A Petition:

Sign a petition: Psychologists say prolonged solitary confinement can drive prisoners insane. But tens of thousands of U.S. prisoners are currently held in isolation. Sign your name to the statement calling for an end to this practice. Here is the link: <http://www.nrcat.org/about-us/take-action-current-legislation/563-psychologists-say-prolonged-solitary-confinement-can-drive-prisoners-insane>

Pray A Novena

We will also hold a Novena wherein for nine consecutive days ending on June 26, we will recite a prayer after each daily Mass in the parish. See the prayer on the other side of this flyer if you are not a daily Mass attendee but would like to participate in the Novena.

Prayer to Mark Torture Awareness Month - A Novena

June 2015

You are invited to pray this novena prayer each day beginning June 18 and ending June 26. May the fervent prayer of many communities of faith bring an end to policies that permit torture of any kind.

God of all creation, we pray for our brothers and sisters throughout the world who endure torture: physically, spiritually, emotionally. In their pain may they experience your presence and care, binding their wounds and supporting and healing them.

We pray for our brothers and sisters throughout the world who inflict torture: physically, spiritually, emotionally. May they experience your presence and care, binding the wounds they bear: wounds they receive as they wound others. Open them to see the dignity of each person. Strengthen them to seek ways to break free from violence.

We pray for our brothers and sisters throughout the world who authorize torture: physically, spiritually, emotionally. Break the hold of fear and anger upon them. Inspire them to see other ways to advance their causes.

We pray for ourselves, confessing our complicity in acts of torture which violate our sisters and brothers and degrade us and our values. Guide us to pray and study, dialogue and speak, and come together to advocate for an end to torture.

O merciful God, may healing overcome brokenness, hope overcome fear, and action overcome despair. Lead us in your way of truth and justice. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, whose life, death and resurrection reveal's God's love is indeed stronger than torture and fear. Amen.

We have also placed the "Torture is Wrong" banners at each of our churches, as we have been doing since 2008, to show publicly that our Catholic faith tradition does not support torture.

St. Thomas Aquinas Parish Human Concerns Committee

Paul Chestnut, Anne Fillin (Pastoral Stewardship Council Representative) Susan Olsen, Ruth and George Chippendale, Jean Doten, Mary Fong, Terry McCaffrey, and Chris Lundin.