



NEWS

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Statement of U.S. Bishop Chairmen on Federal Executions Scheduled This Week

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WASHINGTON —Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, and Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City in Kansas, chairman of the USCCB's Committee on Pro-Life Activities, issued the following statement in response to the federal executions scheduled this week:

“In the last 60 years, before the Trump administration restarted federal executions, there were only four federal executions. Since July, there have been five, which is already more federal executions than were carried out in any year in the last century. There are two more federal executions scheduled this week.

“After the first murder recorded in the Bible, God did not end Cain’s life, but rather preserved it, warning others not to kill Cain (Gn. 4:15). As the Church, 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](#).

“We say to President Trump and Attorney General Barr: Enough. Stop these executions.”

For additional USCCB statements and resources on the death penalty and the recent resumption of federal executions:

- In July of 2019, Bishop Frank J. Dewane, then-chairman of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, [called](#) on the administration to abandon plans to resume federal executions.
- In October 2019, Archbishop Paul S. Coakley, Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory, and Bishop Frank J. Dewane participated in a [roundtable discussion](#) for the World Day Against the Death Penalty.
- Archbishop Coakley, Archbishop Gregory, and Bishop Dewane co-authored an [op-ed](#) in *America Magazine* in December 2019.

- The USCCB restated its opposition to the death penalty in an [amicus curiae brief](#) in a case before the U.S. Supreme Court in January 2020.
- Archbishop Coakley [called](#) on Attorney General Barr and President Trump to reverse course on the executions after the Supreme Court declined to hear the appeals of the death row inmates in June 2020.
- Archbishop Coakley and Archbishop Naumann issued a [statement](#) in August 2020 urging the administration to stop the executions.
- A USCCB [action alert](#) continues to allow Catholics to raise their voices in opposition to the death penalty.

Keywords: U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, USCCB, Pope Francis, Archbishop Paul S. Coakley, Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann, Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, Committee on Pro-Life Activities, Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, death penalty, capital punishment.

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