



Fifty Years of the Death Penalty in the United States

Observing the 50th Anniversary of *Gregg v. Georgia*

History

In 1972, the Supreme Court decided in *Furman v. Georgia* that the death penalty was being applied arbitrarily and discriminatorily. The decision resulted in a de facto moratorium that ended executions in the United States...for four years.

When *Gregg v. Georgia* came before the same court in 1976, they ruled that the death penalty does not violate the Constitution and that states could resume passing down death sentences and carrying out executions as long as procedural safeguards were written into states' capital statutes.

Church Teaching

The teaching of the Catholic Church is clear: "[T]he death penalty is admissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person" (CCC 2267). This 2018 revision of the *Catechism* was a needed clarification of what had been a murky and much-contested delineation between opposing the death penalty in practice, but not in principle. We now have a clear call to work for abolition in our teachings.

As Catholics in Georgia, we should be at the forefront of the movement to abolish the death penalty in our state and in our country.

Resources

We encourage you to use the resources below to engage your communities in formation, prayer, and advocacy in defense of human life and dignity.

Formation & Education

- [Respect Life Toolkit](#)
- [Deacon's Guide to Death Penalty Ministry](#)
- [USCCB – Capital Punishment](#)
- [Pope Leo's Message on Capital Punishment](#)
- [Death Penalty Information Center](#)

Prayer

- Intercessory prayer
 - We pray for an end to the death penalty in Georgia. We pray for all victims of violence, remembering the 77 people our state has put to death in the last fifty years. For lawmakers and elected officials, we pray that they may come to recognize the dignity of all life and take steps to end state violence in Georgia.
- [Prayer to End the Use of the Death Penalty](#)

Advocacy

- [Georgia Catholics Against the Death Penalty](#)
- [Georgia Catholic Conference](#)
- [Catholic Mobilizing Network](#)

Upcoming Events

Mark your calendars for our upcoming events. [Subscribe to our mailing list](#) to make sure you don't miss these or any other events.

Troy Davis and the Legacy of Gregg v. Georgia

Monday, September 21, 7:00 p.m.

Archdiocese of Atlanta

Mass of Remembrance for Victims of State Violence

Monday, November 2, 7:00 p.m.

Holy Cross Catholic Church

Contact

For more information about these resources, information on speakers for events or ideas for how to engage your community, please contact Jayna Hoffacker at jhoffacker@georgiacc.org or 404-920-7367.