

Justice, Peace and Life

December 2020

“Today we state clearly that “the death penalty is inadmissible” and the Church is firmly committed to calling for its abolition worldwide.” -Pope Francis, in the new encyclical [Fratelli Tutti](#)

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

-[Statement](#) from Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, chairman, USCCB Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, and Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, chairman, USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities

In July 2019, Attorney General William Barr directed the Federal Bureau of Prisons to adopt a policy to resume capital punishment in federal cases, after a 16 year hiatus.

The United State Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) was quick to call on the Trump administration to abandon these plans.

Since July of this year, the federal government has executed **eight** people, and has scheduled **five** more executions between now and January 15.

SPEAK OUT for the dignity of human life!

Advocate to stop the execution of [Brandon Bernard](#), scheduled for December 10 and of [Alfred Bourgeois](#), scheduled for December 11.

See the web site for [Catholic Mobilizing Network](#) for inspiring resources on opposition to the death penalty, including this compelling short [video](#) featuring family members of crime victims and a former prison employee.



Virtual Vigil for Brandon Bernard (Federal)
Thursday, Dec. 10 | 2-3 p.m. EST

Virtual Vigil for Alfred Bourgeois (Federal)
Friday, Dec. 11 | 2-3 p.m. EST

Sign up for links to vigils here:
<https://catholicmobilizing.org/virtual-vigils>



Fr. Engelbert Mveng, Nativity, early 1990s.
Central scene from church mural. Holy Angels Church, Aurora, Illinois.

“Jesus, “gentle and humble in heart” (Mt 11:29), was born in poverty and led a simple life in order to teach us to recognize what is essential and to act accordingly.

The nativity scene clearly teaches that we cannot let ourselves be fooled by wealth and fleeting promises of happiness.”

—Pope Francis,
[Apostolic letter Admirabile signum](#)
(“Enchanting Image”)
on the meaning and importance
of the nativity scene



Boycott Amazon: A Christmas Gift for Your Local Economy

Want to help keep the owners and employees from local businesses in your town employed?

Want to help ensure your local and state governments collect enough sales tax so they can fund social services for local youth, elders and low income people?

Support Local Businesses!
Boycott Amazon!

We cannot return to the false securities of the political and economic systems we had before the crisis. We need economies that give to all access to the fruits of creation, to the basic needs of life: to land, lodging and labor. We need a politics that can integrate and dialogue with the poor, the excluded and the vulnerable, that gives people a say in the decisions that affect their lives. We need to slow down, take stock and design better ways of living together on this earth.

-Pope Francis,
A Crisis Reveals What Is in Our Hearts,
November 26, 2020 NY Times op-ed

Tell Congress to Act Now to Provide COVID-19 Relief Before Christmas

The leaders of the USCCB, Catholic Charities USA, Catholic Relief Services and other national Catholic organizations have sent a [letter](#) to the president and Congressional leaders urging them to act now to provide economic relief in response to the on-going COVID-19 pandemic. From the USCCB:

“It has been nearly eight months since Congress passed a COVID-19 aid package. Much of the aid from that legislation has already expired and more will stop at the end of this year. Congress must act quickly to pass a new COVID-19 relief package that addresses the needs of the poor and vulnerable. Families cannot wait any longer. Failure to act would leave millions struggling to pay rent, buy food, afford healthcare, maintain employment, and meet their basic human needs.

As we enter Advent, a season of waiting and longing for the birth of Christ, too many are left waiting for relief. Let us take action to support those most in need among us so that Christ’s vision of justice and mercy will be born again in us. **Tell your Members of Congress** it is time to come to an agreement and support those who are poor and vulnerable by:

- Providing resources to meet the needs of those who are homeless and those struggling to keep a roof over their heads.
- Increasing SNAP benefit amounts.
- Enacting policies that encourage and support employers to retain and rehire workers, providing sufficient unemployment compensation, and considering additional stimulus payments.
- Ensuring affordable healthcare access for everyone during this health crisis, but especially for the poor, uninsured, unemployed, and vulnerable populations including immigrants and refugees - without providing federal funding for abortion coverage.
- Safeguarding those who are most vulnerable to COVID-19 in our criminal justice system and increasing medical resources to care for those who do become ill while incarcerated.
- Providing relief to all schools, including a ten percent reserve of K12 funding to provide tuition scholarships for families whose children attend nonpublic schools. Within the relief set aside for families that send their children to nonpublic schools, Congress should give special consideration to those families with greatest need.”

Justice & Peace Ministry Staff of Catholic Charities:

Monroe: Marcus Ebenhoe 585-546-7220 ext. 6202 Marcus.Ebenhoe@cfrochester.org;

Chemung/Schuyler/Tioga: Kathy Dubel 607-734-9784 ext. 2135; Kathy.Dubel@dor.org

Cayuga/Ontario/Seneca/Yates/Wayne: Robert Vona 315-253-2222 ext. 102 Robert.Vona@dor.org

Livingston: Amy Patterson; 585-658-4466 ext. 25; Amy.Patterson@dor.org

Steuben: Gina Reagan 607-776-8085 ext. 2216; Gina.Reagan@dor.org).

Tompkins: Laurie Konwinski 607-272-5062 ext. 12; Laurie.Konwinski@dor.org

Diocesan Life Issues Coordinator: Shannon Kilbridge 585-328-3228 ext. 1218 shannon.loughlin@dor.org