

New York, November 10, 2015

**Appeal letter by the Community of Sant'Egidio USA to put a hold to all capital state executions during the Holy Year of Mercy.**

This year, Pope Francis announced the worldwide Holy Year of Mercy, due to commence on December 8th, 2015.

Following on from Pope Francis widely expanding actions for hope and healing, peace and justice during the Jubilee Year of Mercy, together with the Community of Sant'Egidio and many people of goodwill around the country and world, we appeal you to apply executive clemency in capital cases in the State of - during the Year of Mercy.

Pope Francis calls on all citizens of the world to be merciful and strive to create a better society. The Holy Year of Mercy is a chance to start that journey, to bring a new hope and to emphasize the merciful side of humanity.

During His recent visit to the United States, His Holiness told Congress:

*<< Let us remember the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" (Mt 7:12).*

*This Rule points us in a clear direction. Let us treat others with the same passion and compassion with which we want to be treated. Let us seek for others the same possibilities which we seek for ourselves. Let us help others to grow, as we would like to be helped ourselves. In a word, if we want security, let us give security; if we want life, let us give life; if we want opportunities, let us provide opportunities. The yardstick we use for others will be the yardstick which time will use for us.*

*The Golden Rule also reminds us of our responsibility to protect and defend human life at every stage of its development. This conviction has led me, from the beginning of my ministry, to advocate at different levels for the global abolition of the death penalty. I am convinced that this way is the best, since every life is sacred, every human person is endowed with an inalienable dignity, and society can only benefit from the rehabilitation of those convicted of crimes.*

*Recently my brother bishops here in the United States renewed their call for the abolition of the death penalty. Not only do I support them, but I also offer encouragement to all those who are convinced that a just and necessary punishment must never exclude the dimension of hope and the goal of rehabilitation>>.*

In the spirit of Mercy, as we enter this important jubilee year, the Pope, the Catholic Church, the Community of Sant'Egidio and citizens of the United States that have signed the attached petition, appeal to you as Governor, to put a hold on executions in the State of - during this Holy Year.

We thank you kindly for your consideration and would be delighted to discuss this matter further, in person or over the phone.

In friendship,

The Community of Sant'Egidio USA