

A silhouette of a person standing behind vertical prison bars, looking out. The background is a dark, textured green.

Dead Man Walking

Religious
Leaders
DIALOGUE
on the

Death PENALTY

Tuesday, January 18, 2011
7:30 p.m. — 9:00 p.m.

Hobby Center
Zilkha Hall
800 Bagby Street
Houston, Texas 77002

PROGRAM

**ROLLING FILM CLIP
FROM DEAD MAN WALKING MOVIE**

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION OF
MASTER OF CEREMONIES**

Patricia Gras

ARIA FROM DEAD MAN WALKING OPERA

Catherine Martin accompanied by composer Jake Heggie

OPENING STATEMENTS

Moderators, Sr. Helen Prejean and Vicki Schieber

PANELISTS COMMENTS

Rev. Harvey Clemons, Jr.

Rev. Mike Cole

Cardinal Daniel DiNardo,

Bishop Janice Huie

Rabbi David Lyon

Rev. Daniel Melendez

Bishop Michael Rinehart

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Rev. Gerry Kelly and Msgr. Frank Rossi

Please submit questions in writing to attendants available on each aisle.

Please visit exhibitors for more information after the program.

MODERATORS



SR. HELEN PREJEAN

Born and raised in Baton Rouge, Helen Prejean has lived and worked in Louisiana all her life. In 1957, she joined the Sisters of St. Joseph of Medaille. Involvement with poor inner-city residents in the St. Thomas Housing Projects in New Orleans in 1981 led her to prison ministry where she counseled death row inmates in the Louisiana State Penitentiary, a ministry she continues today. She has accompanied five men to execution and witnessed their deaths. She also works with murder victims' families and founded Survive, a victims' advocacy group in New Orleans. Sister Helen is the author of *Dead Man Walking: An Eyewitness Account of the Death Penalty in the United States*, which was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. She was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1998 and again in 1999. Since 1984, Sister Helen has divided her time between campaigning against the death penalty and counseling individual death row prisoners. She has accompanied six more men to their deaths. She is a regular interviewee and contributor to national and international publications, and has become a recurring presence on major TV news shows. Besides her degrees in English and religious education, Sister Helen has received honorary degrees from universities all over the world and numerous awards. Sister Helen lives in New Orleans and works with the Death Penalty Discourse Center and the *Dead Man Walking* Play Project. She is presently at work on another book—*RIVER OF FIRE: MY SPIRITUAL JOURNEY TO DEATH ROW*.



VICKI SCHIEBER

Vicki Schieber's daughter, Shannon, was raped and murdered on May 7, 1998 while finishing her first year of graduate school on a full scholarship at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. Since this tragic incident, Vicki and her husband, Sylvester, have dedicated their career and lives to a moratorium on the death penalty. In addition to teaching many high school and university classes on abolition, Vicki runs workshops for state conferences, is a published author, and served on the 2008 Maryland Commission on Capital Punishment. She is now actively teaching the Catholic Social Teaching on the Death Penalty with the Catholic Mobilizing Network to End the Use of the Death Penalty. Vicki is the recipient of the Fannie Mae Foundation Good Neighbor Award, the Courage in Community Award of the McAuley Institute Board of Trustees and the Exceptional Community Spirit Award from Rebuilding Together of Washington, D.C. Despite her tragic loss, she does all this in the name of Catholicism, citing that "The death penalty is against our religion, a belief system in which life is held to be sacred."

PANELISTS of RELIGIOUS LEADERS



**REVEREND HARVEY CLEMONS, JR.
BAPTIST**

The perpetual revivalism of Pleasant Hill Baptist Church spirituality and revitalization of the Fifth Ward community defines the visionary ministry and leadership of Harvey Clemons, Jr.

At the helm of the Pleasant Hill Baptist Church of Houston, Texas since 1983, Rev. Clemons is a native Houstonian and was reared in the Fifth Ward community. Educated in the Houston Independent School District, his studies later at the University of Houston-School of Architecture foretell a desire to design and build. Today, he is a builder of people's lives and their communities.

Instrumental in the comprehensive neighborhood revitalization movement of Fifth Ward, Rev. Clemons served as Chairman of the Fifth Ward Community Redevelopment Corporation from 1989-2009 and is currently President of Pleasant Hill Community Development Corporation both of whose accomplishments include construction of over 200 single-family homes, construction and acquisition of over

2,300 multi-family housing units, and thousands of square feet of commercial space.

"I see Pleasant Hill as the God-appointed agent for these times. We have been assigned to usher anyone who enters the Church door and the residents of Fifth Ward from spiritual darkness into the marvelous light of Jesus Christ," says Rev. Clemons. Unequivocally, this is the underlying focus and driving force of Rev. Clemons as pastor, teacher, and leader of Pleasant Hill.

A continuing student and expositor of God's Word, Rev. Clemons has studied in England at Oxford University, Regents Park College. He is a contributing author of The African-American Devotional Bible and Oxford Sermons. He is a mentor and advisor to religious, government, business and academic leaders throughout the nation. Simply stated by Rev. Clemons, "he loves God and he loves people," which encapsulates his character, ministry and achievements.



REVEREND MIKE COLE PRESBYTERIAN

The Rev. Mike Cole is the General Presbyter of the Presbytery of New Covenant, serving as an overseer or "bishop" for 106 churches in Southeast Texas. Mike graduated from Robert E. Lee High School in Houston, Texas and did his undergraduate studies at the University of Texas and the University of Houston, graduating with a BA in Economics. Mike graduated from the Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary with a Master's of Divinity degree.

In 1971, Mike met and married Elida Garcia Cole (affectionately

known as Ellie). Mike and Ellie adopted one son, Colin (an Arapahoe), who is the proud father of Jacquelynn (9 years old) and Katelynn (7 years old). Colin currently works as a safety supervisor on oil rigs in Colorado.

Mike has served as pastor in Saratoga, WY; Daly City, CA; Roseburg, OR; and Port Arthur, TX. He was called to serve as the General Presbyter of the Presbytery of New Covenant on February 7, 2003. In February, 2008 the presbytery extended Mike's call as General Presbyter for an indefinite term.



CARDINAL DANIEL DINARDO ROMAN CATHOLIC

Cardinal Daniel DiNardo is the second and current Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. Cardinal DiNardo received his undergraduate education at St. Paul Seminary and Duquesne University in Pittsburgh. In 1969, DiNardo was awarded the Basselin Scholarship for Philosophy at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., from where he later obtained a Master's degree in philosophy. He also has licentiate in theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University.

Cardinal DiNardo worked for the Congregation for Bishops in Rome from 1984 to 1991 and taught at the Pontifical North American College. He then returned to Pittsburgh to be a parish priest. Pope John Paul II appointed him Coadjutor Bishop of Sioux City on August 19, 1997. He was consecrated on October 7, 1997 by Bishop Soens, the Bishop of Sioux City. He took over full governance of the diocese on November 28, 1998. He was then named Coadjutor Bishop of Galveston-Houston on January 16, 2004. He was promoted to the rank of Archbishop when the

Diocese became an Archdiocese on December 29, 2004. He succeeded to full governance of the Archdiocese on February 28, 2006. Pope Benedict XVI made him a Cardinal on November 24, 2007.



BISHOP JANICE RIGGLE HUIE METHODIST

Janice Riggle Huie serves as bishop of the Texas Annual Conference of the UMC, having been assigned there in September 2004. The Texas Annual Conference is composed of over 700 congregations and 290,855 members, spread throughout east Texas. It includes Houston, Galveston, Beaumont, Texarkana, Longview, Tyler and College Station. In connection with her Episcopal assignment she serves on the Board of Trustees of The Methodist Hospital, Southwestern University, Wiley College and Lon Morris College as well as The Texas Methodist Foundation. Bishop Huie served as President of the Council of Bishops from May 2006 through May 2008 and currently serves on the Board of Global Ministries and as president of the UMCOR Board of Directors.

Since Bishop Huie's assignment there, the Texas Annual Conference has adopted a bold new mission strategy aimed at making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The primary priorities are as follows: Congregational Excellence (new church starts and re-vitalization of existing congregations), Clergy Excellence (recruiting gifted young pastors and supporting and training current pastors) and a Re-aligned Mission Structure.



RABBI DAVID LYON
JUDAISM
CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL

A native of Chicago, Illinois, Rabbi David Lyon graduated from the University of Arizona in 1984, with a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration. He began his studies at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR), Jerusalem in 1985. He earned his Masters of Arts degree in Hebrew Letters in 1988 at HUC-JIR, Los Angeles, and was ordained Rabbi in 1990, at HUC-JIR, Cincinnati. Upon ordination, he served as Assistant Rabbi and Associate Rabbi at Congregation Beth Israel, Houston, Texas, 1990-1997. He served as Rabbi of Congregation Shaarey Zedek, East Lansing, Michigan, 1997-2000. He served as Rabbi of Temple Shalom, Dallas, Texas, 2000-2004. In June 2004, Rabbi Lyon returned to Congregation Beth Israel to serve as Senior Rabbi.

Rabbi Lyon enjoys the full complement of rabbinic duties in the synagogue. He is a member of the CCAR (Central Conference of American Rabbis) and has served on its Committee on Nominations. Currently, he chairs its Professional Development Committee, serves on its Revenue Committee, and represents the CCAR on a national Reform Jewish Day School Task Force.

In the Houston community, Rabbi Lyon is a Board member of the United Way of Greater Houston and serves on its Community Impact Committee. He served on the Bush-Clinton Relief Committee for recovery from Hurricane Ike on the Gulf Coast. He is Vice-Chair of the Institute for Spirituality and Health at the Texas Medical Center.

Rabbi Lyon writes a weekly email address to the congregation, and he can be heard on KODA 99.1 FM, every Sunday morning at 6:45am. He is the author of the forthcoming book *God of Me: Imagining God Throughout Your Lifetime* (Jewish Lights Publishing, due February 2011).

Rabbi Lyon is married to Lisa and they have four growing children.



REV. DANIEL ENRIQUE MELÉNDEZ IGLESIA HISPANA NUEVA VIDA

Rev. Melendez was born in the city of Port Barrios Izabal, Guatemala in Central America on April 10, 1961. He is married and the father of three children. He is a Pastor, advisor and theology teacher who started his ministerial career in 1979 in Guatemala at the Theological Seminary of Quetzaltenango. Rev. Melendez was pastor and coordinator of Theological Education in various cities of the country of Guatemala, among them are Jutiapa, Chiquimula, Momostenango, Cuilapa and Huehuetenango, and founded various centers of Education with extensions in different Mayan communities.

He arrived in 1989 in Houston and has served as pastor at Hispanic New Life, a congregation of more than 400 parishioners. Since arriving he has created missionary projects for Guatemala and Mexico, such as Wings of Hope, New Life Missions, and Project Jeremiah. Rev. Melendez also directed the humanitarian help for Honduras during Hurricane Mitch, El Salvador during the earthquake of 2001 and help for Tabasco with the floods of 2007. He founded the first 24 hour Christian radio station, Radio Vision 1480 AM, and the first 24 hour Christian television channel, 24

Celestial TV. He is also the director and founder of the Pastors in Action. He continues to direct Nights of Prayer for Houston on the first Monday of every month in front of City Hall, with attendance of more than 300 people. He also has participated in various television programs and produced radio programs like Women with Power, One Two Three, Talking with the Community, and Roots of my Land. Currently, Rev. Melendez is directing the radio program Themes and Debates on 920 AM, a program that enjoys a large audience from the Hispanic community.



**BISHOP MICHAEL RINEHART
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Serving as bishop of the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is an honor, a challenge, and a joy. It has given me the opportunity to work with many gifted pastors and committed people of faith. We're creating communities that make disciples who serve the world in Jesus' name.

Evangelism is one of my passions, and our synod's highest priority. Evangelism is making fully devoted followers of Christ, who taught love of God and neighbor as the greatest commandments. Of late much time has been devoted to helping congregations get back on their feet after four devastating hurricanes in the last four years.

I've also been very involved in our companion synod program, particularly with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Peru. I'm just starting to learn about our other companion synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Central African Republic.

JOINT FAITH STATEMENT
FROM RELIGIOUS LEADERS

An Interfaith Call
for the
End of the Use of the
Death Penalty

Today, as faith leaders of many and varied faith communities we join in common cause, raising a common voice, to express our deeply felt concerns regarding the use of the death penalty in the state of Texas. While we address the leaders of our state, our legislators, our Governor and other elected officials, we also speak to all people of good will in presenting both our moral and practical reservations over the issue of capital punishment.

We do not, however, speak alone. We note that in our congregations, our parishes, our synagogues and throughout our communities increasing numbers of Texans are beginning to question the wisdom, efficacy and virtue of the death penalty as a means to confront crime and achieve justice.

Let us be clear. While stating our opposition to the death penalty we also wish to express our concern over violence in

our communities and our heartfelt sympathy with those who suffer from crime. Further, we pray for and minister to victims of violence and their families. We know the fear, the heartache and suffering that result from crime. We believe emphatically that those who commit violent crimes should be punished but in a manner that is both humane and restorative.

Our state leads the nation in the application of the death penalty, accounting for more than one third of the executions nationwide since 1976. But so often it is not the crime itself that is the leading factor in determining the application of the death penalty. Rather, issues of race, geography, economics, the defendant's mental capacity or lack of access to adequate counsel contribute to the disproportionate use of capital punishment against the poor and minorities.

During the past three decades, improved scientific and investigative procedures have exposed the flaws and failures of the judicial system in its employment of the death penalty, resulting in the exoneration of at least 138 death row inmates, including 12 in Texas. We must note this figure does not include those numerous cases of execution where the guilt of the accused or the fairness of the conviction was in serious doubt.

In light of these developments, we applaud the steady decrease in the use of the death penalty in our state, a pattern that mirrors the national trend. We commend those elected officials in their pursuit and embrace of alternative

means of protecting our society and of punishing the truly guilty without taking human life.

Therefore, we encourage the state of Texas to invest in victim support services, effective law enforcement, drug treatment programs, child and family services, and mental healthcare—all measures that hold potential for preventing future acts of violence. We should do all we can to make sure our state's resources are directed towards the improvement of life, not its destruction.

In conclusion, we affirm once more our opposition to the use of the death penalty. Our various faith traditions emphasize and uphold both the sacredness of life and the human capacity for redemption. It is in this spirit that we have joined our voices in the common cause of calling for repeal of the death penalty in the state of Texas.

We urge you, our elected officials, to take a closer look at the reality of capital punishment in Texas and ask that you seek alternative ways to achieve healing and justice for all those who suffer in the wake of violent crimes. We thank you for your leadership and we pray for the time when our state is led away from this unnecessary and arbitrary form of punishment.

Sincerely,

Rev. Harvey Clemons Jr.
Rev. Mike Cole
Cardinal Daniel DiNardo
Bishop C. Andrew Doyle

Bishop Janice Huie
Rabbi David Lyons
Rev. Daniel Melendez
Bishop Michael Rinehart

A VERY SPECIAL “THANK-YOU”

“Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy” (Mt 5:7)

Patricia Gras (PBS Channel 8)

Catherine Martin (Houston Grand Opera)

Jake Heggie, Composer of the Dead Man Walking Opera

Art Browning, Videographer

Michael Pickett, Publicity Designer

Denise Wright, Hobby Center

Gail Clifton, Fine Print Designers

Carol Barnwell, Episcopal Diocese

Elizabeth Baisley and Debbie Hirsch, Houston Grand Opera

Houston Event Committee who made this event possible

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Open Hands Foundation

Pleasant Hill Baptist Church

Sisters of Charity of Incarnate Word

Stand Down Texas Project

Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty

Texas Impact

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OPPORTUNITIES of INVOLVEMENT

- Become a member of the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (TCADP) and/or their email list at www.tcadp.org. Emails include information on upcoming executions, breaking news, legislative updates, and local events.
- Host a speaker or watch a film on the death penalty with your faith community, civic organization, or student group (films and speakers available from TCADP).
- Write, visit, and call your state senator and representative and share your concerns about the Texas death penalty. Determine your legislators' position on the death penalty and share any information you gather with the TCADP office.
- Get involved with TCADP's Houston Chapter.
- Ask your clergy to sign the interfaith sign-on letter (contact TCADP for more information).
- Learn about TCADP's partnership with Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation (MVFR).
- Attend the TCADP Annual Conference: February 19, 2011, in Austin.

**Go to www.tcadp.org or contact info@tcadp.org
for more details on all of these ideas.**

EXHIBITORS

■ **Catholic Mobilizing Network to End the Use of the Death Penalty**

Catholic Mobilizing Network (CMN) proclaims the Church's unconditional pro-life teaching and its application to capital punishment and restorative justice. CMN works in close collaboration with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to prepare Catholics for informed involvement in campaigns to repeal state death penalty laws and expand or inaugurate restorative justice programs.

www.catholicmobilizing.org

■ **Murder Victims' Families For Reconciliation**

Founded in 1976, Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation (MVFR) is a national organization of family members of victims of both homicide and executions who oppose the death penalty in all cases. MVFR includes people of many different perspectives. Because violent crime cuts across a broad spectrum of society, our members are geographically, racially and economically diverse.

■ **Rev. Carroll Pickett**

Rev. Pickett served as the death house chaplain at the Walls Unit for 15 years and witnessed 95 executions. He is the author of *Within These Walls: Memoirs of a Death House Chaplain* and is the subject of the documentary film, "At the Death House Door." Books and DVDs will be available for sale.

■ **Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty**

The Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (TCADP) is a statewide, grassroots membership organization working to end the death penalty in Texas. TCADP engages in outreach, education, and advocacy aimed at raising awareness of issues related to the death penalty and mobilizing the citizens of Texas—and their elected officials—to support abolition.

■ **Texas Impact**

Texas Impact is a statewide religious grassroots network whose members include individuals, congregations, and governing bodies of the Christian, Jewish and Muslim faiths. Texas Impact exists to advance state public policies that are consistent with universally held social principles of the Abrahamic traditions.

<http://texasimpact.org/>

TEXAS FACTS ABOUT THE DEATH PENALTY

1. The State of Texas has executed 464 people since 1982, out of 1,234 executions nationwide since 1977. Harris county alone accounts for 115 of those executions, more than any other state, except Texas itself.
2. Death sentences in Texas have dropped more than 70% since 2003, reaching a historic low in 2010 when juries sent 8 individuals to death row. In the years 1991-2002, Texas averaged 39 death sentences per year.
3. There currently are 317 people (307 men and 10 women) on death row in Texas. Texas holds the third-largest death row population in the nation, after California (713) and Florida (393). There are 105 people convicted in Harris County who are awaiting execution.
4. 38.8% of Texas death row inmates are African American, 30.3% are white, 29.7% are Hispanic/Latino, and 1.3% are another racial/ethnic background.
5. The vast majority of death row inmates are represented by court-appointed attorneys. In Texas, nearly one in four inmates was represented by a lawyer who had been reprimanded, placed on probation, suspended, or banned from practicing law by the state bar.

6. Since 1973, 138 individuals nationwide—including 12 in Texas—have been released from death row based on evidence of their wrongful conviction. Two of these exonerations involved Harris County cases (Vernon McManus, released in 1987 after 10 years on death row, and Ricardo Aldape Guerra, released in 1997 after 15 years on death row).
7. There are serious concerns regarding a number of potential wrongful executions in Texas, including the case of Cameron Willingham (executed in 2004 on the basis of false expert witness testimony and faulty forensic analysis) and Claude Jones (executed in 2000 on the basis of faulty forensic analysis).
8. In Texas, the cost of an average death penalty case is nearly 3 times higher than imprisoning someone in maximum security for 40 years (Dallas Morning News).
9. In 2009, New Mexico joined 14 other U.S. states and the District of Columbia that do not allow the death penalty.
10. 139 countries have abolished the death penalty in law or practice. In 2008, 93% of all known executions took place in five countries—China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and the USA.

"Help us O God of our salvation; . . . according to thy great power, preserve those doomed to die!" (Psalm 79:9, 11)

*I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses.
Choose life so that you and your descendants may live.
—(Deuteronomy 30:19)*