

Condemning Prolonged Solitary Confinement Resolution

Proposer of Resolution: Mr. Richard Jordan

Parish or Organization: The Episcopal Peace Fellowship, St. Bartholomew's Chapter, St. Bartholomew's, Manhattan

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Title of Resolution: Condemning Prolonged Solitary Confinement as a Form of Torture

Whereas, the United Nations and the General Convention of The Episcopal Church have adopted policies against the use of prolonged solitary confinement of persons in prisons, jails and detention centers; and

Whereas, The St. Bartholomew's Chapter of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship proposes that the 242nd Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of New York recognize certain definitions pertaining to prolonged solitary confinement and adopt certain policies with respect thereto.

TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION(S):

[4] Resolved: that the 242nd Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of New York recognize the definition of prolonged solitary confinement as the confinement of prisoners for 22 hours or more a day without meaningful human contact, and in excess of 15 days, as a form of torture (United Nations Mandela Rules); and further

[5] Resolved: that the 242nd Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of New York recall Resolution D029 adopted at the 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church, that condemned the use of prolonged solitary confinement at the national, state, local and military jurisdictions, immigration detention centers, and private prisons; and further

[6] Resolved: that the 242nd Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of New York call upon Episcopalians to consider Hebrews 13:3, wherein we are asked to "Remember those in prison, as if you were together with them in prison", to demand that New York State end any use of prolonged solitary confinement in our prisons, jails, and detention centers, whether publicly run or contracted with private companies, and to find alternatives to solitary confinement; and further

[7] Resolved: that the 242nd Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of New York encourage congregations in the Episcopal Diocese of New York to study this issue of solitary confinement, and encourage their members to take action, as individually felt called to do, in contacting legislators to ensure that pending and already-adopted legislation be voted on and implemented.

Explanation

Those present at the 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church in Austin, Texas, this past July, will recall the visit to the Immigration Holding Facility (T. Don Hutto Residential Detention Center in Taylor, Texas) and the moving reactions to, and by, those being held in the facility when bishops, deputies, and others arrived for an outdoor prayer service. Building upon our Scriptures dealing with prisoners and captives, the St. Bartholomew's Chapter of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship has submitted this resolution for consideration at the 242nd Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of New York. A similar resolution was adopted by the 177th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Western New York on 25 October, 2014. Solitary confinement is often used as an internal prison facility mechanism to punish those confined for violating rules that have nothing to do with the reason for which they were incarcerated. We feel the time has come to end this mechanism that cannot allow those in prison to correct their behavior; rather, it hardens hearts.