

EXCEPTING CHRIST

Christians and State Sponsored Murder

Here's a toast to all the folks on death row right now awaiting the executioner's guillotine who are shackled there with dread and can only escape into their heads to find peace in the form of a dream. ~ Ani Difranco

Patrick is a confessed murderer.
Patrick is a child of God.



Is he not "the least of these"?

March 17th is St. Patrick's Day. March 17th we will kill Patrick Moody.

By Kevin P. Durham Bureau.

Walking down the div school hall, I found a sign. Plain white 8x10 paper, 40 point times new roman font. Black text. On the whole it was not what a designer would have chosen as a way to catch the eye. What caught my eye was the message. "On St. Patrick's day we will Kill Patrick."

Honestly, I thought this was the text of a confession wrought by prophetic terrorists. Terrorists who chose this hallway, this building, and this

university to bring their warning and demands to light. I wondered if I could touch it, or if the FBI would soon be dusting for fingerprints.

There was more text, a smaller font, and details perhaps. Would this be a beheading I wondered? a shooting? a stabbing? No. It was to be lethal injection. "We" happen to be the state of North Carolina. The man in question is a confessed and convicted murder. The man is Patrick Moody.

Someone's son. Someone's loved one. Patrick is a man who, despite his crimes, is more than the sum of his deeds. Patrick is more than a murder. He is more than a criminal. Patrick is a child of God. A sinner just like you and I. Forgiven.

In my time I've heard many arguments for and against Capital Punishment. Sooner or later the issue becomes economic. Should we pay to keep someone alive in

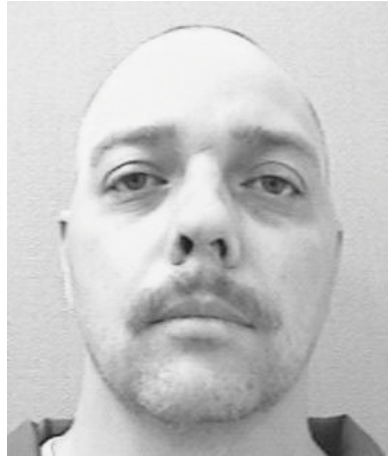
prison for life when it is cheaper to execute him or her? Should we pay for cable for murderers? Yes. Yes, I think we should. One murder, one crime doesn't justify, or make just the death of another. This isn't an issue of economics, or of justice, but one of life. If we Christians are going to proclaim an ethic of life we cannot choose to end someone's life, regardless of the situation. Pro-life isn't, if we choose to support capital punishment. Will we choose to bite the hand of the system that keeps the least of these separate from us? Will we stay on our knees in prayer for the victims, the governors, and the men and women we condemn? Or will we bite the hand that "protects" us from those who frighten us by asking them to stop these senseless deaths.

A week from today, on St. Patrick's Day, 2am will come and go while many of us recuperate from a hard week on the beach. But at 2am on St.

Patrick's day Patrick Moody will slip across the Jordan, after one last kiss of a cold needle. May our prayers be



I am Patrick, a sinner, most unlearned, the least of all the faithful, and utterly despised by many. ~ Confessions of St. Patrick



Christ be with me, Christ within me,
 Christ behind me, Christ before me,
 Christ beside me, Christ to win me;
 Christ to comfort and restore me;
 Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
 Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
 Christ in hearts of all that love me,
 Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

with his family, North Carolina's Leaders, and the men who are compelled to carry out his sentence? Everyone is Irish on St. Patty's day. You're Irish, I'm Irish, and Patrick is Irish. There is camaraderie in the glass, and joy in the celebration of the day. Because there is one color, one nationality on St. Patty's day we share in Patrick's sentence, even though we do not feel the needle itself. We are more than the nationality we will wear next Friday, just as Patrick is more than the murder he committed. Let us remember he is not just the sum of their criminal actions.

Next Friday, on the feast day of a man we call St. Patrick many people will stand outside the gates of Central Prison in Raleigh. Some will protest. Some will pray. Some will peacefully, and non-violently attempt to prohibit the states three required witnesses from entering the building, thus, in theory, preventing the murder of St. Patrick. Tradition says St. Patrick died of old age, perhaps he will. Perhaps we as a divinity school

will gather together with one voice to speak the truth of this murder to the powers that claim authority over us. Perhaps our professors, and the administration will gather the courage to join us in speaking the truth.

St. Patrick's day, St. Patrick's hour is known. What is unknown, and unknowable is what affect the truth will have when spoken to power. Perhaps North Carolina will one day be a place free from the terror of state sponsored murder.