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**- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -
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Faithful gather to pray for end to death penalty, life of local prisoner

MICHIGAN CITY – Led by Bishop Robert J. McClory and facilitated through the Diocese of Gary Office of Pro-Life Activities, there will be a Prayer Vigil on the evening of Oct. 9 at 8 p.m. in the Chicago Street parking lot outside the Michigan City state prison in anticipation of the state of Indiana's scheduled execution of death row inmate Roy Lee Ward at midnight on Oct. 10, 2025.

Coincidentally, this day has been designated as the World Day Against the Death Penalty, when all are called to pray for an end to the death penalty and all victims of violence.

The service will be a peaceful gathering to pray, not a rally.

Bishop McClory encourages the community to attend, to give public witness seeking an end to the death penalty in Indiana and worldwide. The bishop noted that doing so is a "witness to the value of all human life...to stand for the dignity of all human life, including those who have been the victims of violence and those themselves who await time on death row."

Father Richard Holy, director of pro-life activities for the Diocese of Gary and pastor of St. Edward in Lowell, asserted that justice is not served by using the cruel and unusual punishment of the death penalty.

"We sincerely mourn with all families who have had a loved one murdered," Father Holy said. "It is a heinous, horrible crime. We continue to be filled with revulsion and anger at the rape and murder of then 15-year-old Stacey Payne. We do not see justice served, however, in adding another human life to the death toll. The execution of Roy Ward will not bring Stacey back."

Ward was sentenced to death in 2007 for the 2001 rape and murder of 15-year-old Stacy Payne in Spencer County. According to the state, Ward has exhausted all appeals and no legal stays remain.

Twenty-five years ago, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops first called for an end to the death penalty. The bishops have stated that no matter how heinous the crime, if society can protect itself without ending a human life, it should do so.

ONLINE RESOURCES:

- [Prayer Vigil Program](#)
- [Faithful invited to pray for end to death penalty](#)
- [CULTURE OF LIFE](#)

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About the Diocese of Gary

The Diocese of Gary serves an estimated 170,000 Catholics in Lake, Porter, LaPorte and Starke counties through 54 parishes, two missions, one Catholic student center, three diocesan high schools, one private high school, one diocesan elementary school and 16 parish elementary schools that serve 6,318 students. An additional 5,271 students are enrolled in parish Catholic formation programs. More than two million are served by Catholic affiliated agencies, including seven Catholic hospitals, residential and day care facilities for adults and children, and centers for Social Services.