

Invitation to pray

In the short few days before Kelly Gissendaner will be put to death for her involvement in Gregory Owen's murder of Doug Gissendaner, we invite you to uphold all parties involved in prayer. Please join members of various faith communities, both conservative and liberal, who will be praying three times a day: **8 a.m., noon, and 8 p.m.** The ways and words of prayer will be different for each of us, but we will be one in our dedication to Love in those moments, and until her scheduled execution by lethal injection in Jackson, GA on Monday, March 2 at 7 p.m.

Prayer suggestions

Please consider including the following parties in your prayers. I offer commentary in the hope that it may be helpful. Take only what is. There is a brief summary of Kelly Gissendaner's appeal for clemency at the conclusion of this invitation.

- Kelly. That she will be sustained by the Love that has transformed her, and held by the compassion she has extended to those whose way is vengeance.
- The Gissendaner family. For those broken by the loss of son and father, a wrong that can never be made right. For those who begged for the life of their mother, daughter and granddaughter. The names of Kelly's children are Kayla, Dakota and Brandon.
- The prison staff. For those who enact the will of the state, both in its desire for rehabilitation and its desire for order, for they are not immune to the force of these decisions. Lee Arrendale State Prison in Alto, GA, employs numerous correctional officers and support staff. Rev. Susan Bishop and all the prison chaplains.
- Kelly's friends and fellow inmates. Kelly completed the 12-week Cognitively-Based Compassion Training course, as well as graduated from the Theology Certificate Program at Arrendale, which is sponsored by the Atlanta Theological Association. 21 people appeared on Kelly's behalf at her clemency hearing. Both here and abroad there are those who have had the privilege of crossing paths with Kelly and bearing witness to a life transformed. Of course, Kelly's classmates live in closest proximity to this decision, and have fewer avenues for grief.
- Kelly's lawyers. Her legal team has worked tirelessly.
- State and federal judicial staff. There are many, from judges to clerks, who will be going over Kelly's case in the next short while.
- Gregory Owen. He is incarcerated at a facility in Washington state, and living with the responsibility for the end of one life at his hands, and the end of another life by his plea deal. He is eligible for parole in eight years.
- Prisoners at Jackson. Particularly the ones on death row who will go through the death watch lockdown once again.
- Georgia. And all her voting citizens in whose name we kill.

Brief summary

Most details of the crime and appeal for clemency can be accessed online. I wish only to add a few details not featured in standard public statements:

- Kelly accepts full responsibility for her involvement in the murder of her husband, Douglas Gissendaner: "it is impossible to put into words the overwhelming sorrow and remorse I feel ...

there is just no way to capture the depth of my sorrow and regret. I would change everything if I could.”

- Over the course of her 18-year incarceration, Kelly has undergone a profound spiritual transformation.
- Kelly is respected by Department of Corrections staff. She is seen as an example to other inmates and viewed as an asset to the institution. Former warden Vanessa O’Donnell said of Kelly, “[s]he can provide hope to the most desperate female offender in a manner no one else could possibly understand.”
- Doug Owens admitted in post-conviction proceedings that he lied at trial about three key facts to discredit Kelly in the eyes of the jury: a) Kelly did not provide the murder weapon, the knife b) Kelly did not walk up into the woods some 300-500 feet to view her husband’s body to ensure that he was dead and c) He recruited another person to help him kill Mr. Gissendaner. He has never disclosed the identity of this person.
- If the state proceeds to execute Ms. Gissendaner, it will be the first time in the modern death penalty era (post-1976) that Georgia has executed an individual who was not the “trigger person” – that is, the person who actually used violence in the crime.
- Legally, the Board of Pardons can revoke their decision to deny clemency. Clemency, just to clarify, is not a request for pardon for Kelly’s crimes.

The 54-page document prepared for her clemency appeal can be read here:

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B4lsilLwarZHVRHJleIA2RE5sU1k>

I, Christina Conroy, am writing in my voice but on behalf of a diverse group whose words and intentions for prayer will be different than my own. Please read this sparse invitation in the spirit of unity in diversity, and send this along as needed with necessary acts of translation. Some may wish to include only the opening invitation to prayer. We are using social media to honor Kelly’s life using #kellyonmymind and #icalledtheGov. Join us as you are able.

Under the Mercy,
Christina Conroy, February 27, 2015.