



Anti-death penalty activists protest in front of the Holman Correctional Facility in Atmore, Ala., on Jan. 25, 2024. (AP/Kim Chandler, File)

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As we celebrate the birth of Christ — a season grounded in mercy and hope — President Joe Biden has exemplified these values with his decision to [commute the death sentences](#) of 37 federal inmates on death row.

In the spirit of Pope Francis, who has emphasized mercy throughout his pontificate, Biden has reminded us of the pathway to a more humane society, timely prioritizing redemption over retribution. We must cling dearly to this example and never let go.

The commutation of these 37 death sentences goes beyond simple legal actions; it sends a powerful message to everyone willing to hear. It conveys that mercy is a sign of strength, not weakness, that forgiveness can lead to transformation if given the chance, and that every life possesses inherent dignity.

[Related: Catholics praise President Biden's mercy for death penalty inmates](#)

In a time when division and conflict dominate the headlines, Biden's action also serves as a reminder of the ability, indeed the necessity, of mercy to heal and bring people together. This message should resonate deeply in the Christmas season when we sense the possibility and hope of unity and ponder the Christian contrarian pathway forward.

Oh, that place of paradox core to our faith: light in darkness, power, and majesty in a single birth. And let us take a moment to express gratitude to a president who, in this instance, has exhibited more than simple values but a pathway to a more compassionate world.

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