

Litany for the 20th Anniversary of the Opening of the Guantánamo Bay Detention Center

Voice 1: “We do things wrong, we make mistakes, we review those and we vow never to do them again.”

Senator John McCain, in an interview on “Face the Nation”, on December 14, 2014.

Voice 2: “My dear wife and lovely kids,

I don’t know when I am coming out but pray for me that it will be soon. I cried a lot when you told me about how the kids talk to their cars and toys as if I am talking to them on the phone. Please try to be easy on them. Don’t send any pictures of the kids – it will make it hard on me here in jail.

Whatever happens to me be with Allah. I love you all.”

Shaker Aamer’s first letter from Guantánamo, 2003. Mr. Aamer was released from Guantánamo in October 2015.

Voice 3: “It was so painful that I forgot every enjoyable moment in my life.”

Maher Arar, a Canadian citizen detained by the U.S. and transferred to Syria where he was tortured. He has received an apology and compensation from the Canadian government.

Voice 4: “... the [White House] is extremely concerned Powell would blow his stack if he were to be briefed on what’s been going on.”

Internal CIA email from John Rizzo, dated July 31, 2003, regarding the CIA’s detention and interrogation program.

All: Not “I would do it again” but “Never again!”

Voice 1: God of all creation, be with us this day and every day. Encourage your people to seek justice and peace as we live one with another across the globe.

Voice 2: We pray for those who have been tortured and indefinitely detained. We pray for the family members of those tortured, those who died in detention, and those held in indefinite detention.

Voice 3: We pray for those who tortured and those who authorized torture.

Voice 4: We pray that we may learn from our mistakes, put in place stronger laws to stop torture and abuse, and lead in protecting human rights at home and around the world.

All: Not “I would do it again” but “Never again!”

Voice 4: God of new beginnings, we pray for the day when we no longer need to gather to proclaim “Close Guantánamo!”

Voice 3: We pray for those imprisoned at Guantánamo today, many in indefinite detention without trial.

Voice 2: We pray for those working at Guantánamo today.

Voice 1: We pray that the United States may live up to its highest ideals, remembering that each and every person has dignity and worth. We pray for wisdom for our leaders.

All: My worth is not more than that of another.

My safety is not more important than that of another.

Forgive me when I forget.

Forgive us when we act in direct opposition to what we hold dearest.

We pray for an end to the divisions that perpetuate “othering” our fellow human beings – an end to racism, an end to xenophobia, an end to religious bigotry, and an end to any and all destructive divisions. O God of grace and peace, may your light shine ever brighter in each and every person.

Amen.

Litany written by Rev. T.C. Morrow, National Religious Campaign Against Torture.

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