

Comunità di Sant'Egidio

Rome, March 16th 2009

Dear Governor Richardson,

Let me first congratulate you for your impressive record and as a man of vision. This has made you a well known leader focused on the common good, internationally and in New Mexico. Your successful efforts to improve education, build a high-wage economy, defending workers' salaries, expanding health care access and investing in renewable energy make you a man that encourages social justice.

I am writing to you on behalf of the Community of Sant'Egidio, an International Organization that was nominated 3 times as a candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize as you were. Even though I have not yet met you, your good name precedes you. My organization has been impressed by the similarity and convergence between your personal work as US Special Envoy and as a US Ambassador - freeing hostages, fostering peace - and the activity of the Community of Sant'Egidio in brokering the Peace Accord in Mozambique, fostering peace in Guatemala, the Ivory Coast, Burundi and other countries – working, as you did, side by side with inspirational people as well as controversial leaders in order to get more humanity and a detente in difficult moments of our recent history, such as Nelson Mandela or Slobodan Milosevic. The Community of Sant'Egidio, born in Rome and now present and active in 70 countries of the world is, as you are, engaged on issues of reconciliation, peace, and in a global fight against poverty.

The Community of Sant'Egidio launched in 2002 a world movement, the Cities for Life-Cities Against the Death Penalty movement, that links now 1,000 cities in the world and has the Colosseum of Rome as the living logo of this world campaign . In this regard, we would like to extend to you an official invitation, on behalf of the Community of Sant'Egidio, together with the Mayor of Rome, Gianni Alemanno, to visit Rome to emphasize with a special lighting of the Colosseum the great step New Mexico is undertaking, in the initiative of its legislators and with your leadership. A special ceremony in front of the world, will make your courage a special page of history to inspire others.

The next hours are going to be crucial for your decision about the abolition of the death penalty in your State. There can be different reasons that may lead you to legitimize such a proposal by signing the law, and this is up to you, your wisdom and experience, and your own responsibility. On our part we compliment and admire the process that is leading your State and your civil society to a step that is historical, equal to what happened in New Jersey.

New Mexico will have a very special impact far beyond the United States by taking a courageous decision that has a universal, positive, and contagious value. It helps the international debate and goes in the direction of the historical Resolution approved by the General Assembly at the UN on December, 18th 2007, confirmed by the First Report on the Death Penalty by the Secretary General of the UN Ban Ki Moon last year. It confirms that is possible in our world to invest in alternative solutions to a punishment that has no margins for reconsideration, for equity or rehabilitation and that, in the Northern hemisphere of the world has extremely high costs for the whole of society. Definitely, your final signature to the Bill that repeals the death penalty in New Mexico would mean a step forward in a mature culture of life, since the death penalty inflicted by the State, in spite of any good intention, does not discourage a “culture of death”.

We are aware of how heavy a decision on this issue must be, and we trust in you, in your foresight and in your moral and political strength. We would like to express our solidarity and our availability to make known to the whole world your decision, that we hope is a positive one, regarding the abolition of the death penalty in New Mexico.

I look forward to receiving the good news about your State and your visit to Rome. Please accept my deepest and warmest, respectful regards.

Mario Marazziti



Spokesperson, Community of Sant'Egidio

Mario Marazziti
Community of Sant'Egidio
Piazza di Sant'Egidio 3A
00153 Rome - Italy
Tel nrs: +39 335 726 3641 - +39 346 850 1247
Fax nr +39 06 5836725