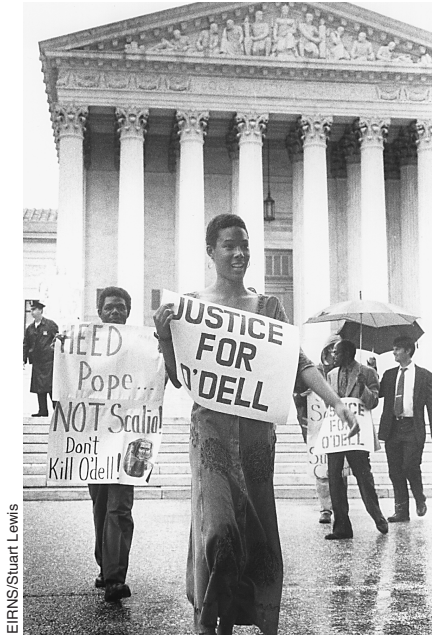


# O'Dell Execution: Fight vs. Death Penalty

Joseph Roger O'Dell III was executed in Virginia on July 23 despite an international protest mobilization. Pope John Paul II appealed personally to President Clinton to halt the execution. Italy's Prime Minister Romano Prodi appealed to Governor Allen and to the U.S. Supreme Court. Hundreds of Italian parliamentarians called for clemency.

• On July 18, Lyndon LaRouche penned a letter to the editor of the *Arlington Catholic Herald* in Virginia, which covers the diocese in which Associate Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, a professed Roman Catholic, resides. Scalia cast the deciding vote in the 5-4 decision against O'Dell's appeal. LaRouche wrote, "The purpose of my letter is to call on St. Catherine's Roman Catholic Church, of which Justice Scalia is a member, to repudiate his actions as a Supreme Court Justice, from the pulpit. As long as his philosophy is given credence by leaders of the Church, it will mislead faithful Catholics that it is somehow coherent with their faith. . . .

"If we forget the Christian appreciation of Genesis 1:26-28, we join the Social Darwinists in that return to paganism, in whose arena there is no moral distinction between man and the beasts, while the mob, acting with Scalia's endorsement, delivers the verdict, thumbs up, or down. If we repudiate *agapē* in matters of justice, as Scalia does, then, as the beloved I Corinthians 13 warns, we are as nothing."



*Supreme Court vigil, the evening of Joseph O'Dell's execution.*

• On July 21, two days before the execution, the Schiller Institute contacted Mother Teresa in Calcutta, asking her to make an appeal in the case. She released a moving call to Governor Allen and Justice Scalia, saying, "I come before you today to appeal for the life of a man—Joseph Roger O'Dell. I do not know what he has done to be condemned to death. All I know is that he, too, is a child of God, created for greater things—to love and to be loved. I pray that Joseph is at peace with God; that he

has said sorry to God and to whomever he has hurt. Let us not take away his life. Let us bring hope into his life and into all our lives." Her appeal was read to O'Dell before he was killed.

• On July 23, the evening of the execution, the Schiller Institute held a candlelight vigil outside the U.S. Supreme Court.

• On July 28, Helga Zepp LaRouche, founder of the Schiller Institute, released an "Open Letter to the Nation of Italy," urging that the mobilization against the killing of O'Dell be turned into a fight to end the corruption in the U.S. judicial system, by taking up the case for the exoneration of Lyndon LaRouche. "To those determined to have no more Joseph O'Dells, I urge you: Take what [former U.S. Attorney General] Ramsey Clark has identified as the worst case of the U.S. Justice Department, and overturn it, by demanding that President Clinton exonerate Lyndon LaRouche."

• On July 29, at the request of O'Dell's widow, Lori Urs O'Dell, the Schiller Institute organized a vigil at the Norfolk International Airport, as O'Dell's body was being placed on the plane that would carry him to his final resting place in Palermo, Italy, which has determined to make his gravesite a monument against the death penalty. The vigil was led by Father Tom Caraluzzi, an Episcopal Vicar in the Richmond Roman Catholic Diocese.



**Left:** Lori Urs O'Dell (center), widow of Joseph O'Dell, with Father Tom Caraluzzi and Sister Helen Prejean, at Norfolk vigil organized by the Schiller Institute.

**Right:** Sister Helen Prejean, author of "Dead Man Walking," speaks, before accompanying O'Dell's body to Italy.



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