

Fast and Vigil at the Supreme Court

By John Holden

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MSJC and members of its Death Penalty Abolition and Restorative Justice Team were sponsors of, and participants in, the **28th annual Fast & Vigil to Abolish the Death Penalty**. Held each June 29 to July 2 at the U.S. Supreme Court (and also online in 2020 and 2021), the event includes 'teach-in' sessions with murder victim family members, death row exonerees, death row families, and leaders in the national abolition movement.

In one of the moving talks, Jack Sullivan shared the story of the murder of his niece 24 years ago.

"Not one of our family's needs could ever have been met by an execution, by the state-sponsored death of the person who was responsible... It boggles my mind, even now, that there are those, even those in the household of faith, who would dare tell me that my needs, and my family's needs in the aftermath of Jennifer's murder, could best be met by the execution, by the state-sponsored homicide, of the person responsible... We said 'No!' We said no, we will not invest ourselves in systems of retribution, of revenge or retaliation, for they would not serve us at all. They would not help us with our grieving... They would not help us heal; they would not restore us."

As Shane Claiborne summarized later that night,

"The people that we've heard over the last few days are folks that have a lot of wounds, and yet they know that the wounds won't heal by creating more wounds, and that's exactly what the death penalty does."

To learn more, go to <http://www.abolition.org/fastandvigil/index.html> and <https://msjc.net/death-penalty-abolition-and-restorative-justice-issue-team>.

