



MARYKNOLL OFFICE FOR GLOBAL CONCERNS

Peace, Social Justice and Integrity of Creation

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For immediate release

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Maryknoll responds to release of Senate torture report

December 10, 2014 – A 500-page executive summary of the Senate Intelligence Committee’s report on its multi-year investigation into the CIA’s use of torture was finally released yesterday, two years after its approval. Maryknoll recognizes the great importance of the publication of this document, which details terrible acts of horrific brutality. These included waterboarding sessions which left detainees convulsing and vomiting, and the death, apparently from hypothermia, of a partially naked prisoner who was chained to a concrete floor.

That these and other reprehensible acts were done in our name should shock the conscience of every U.S. American. The report clearly documents that these immoral techniques often failed to generate intelligence or produced false information. (The intelligence ultimately provided could have been acquired by lawful means.) Finally, the report shows that the CIA misled both Congress and certain members of the Bush administration in order to obtain approval for its torture program.

Maryknoll missionaries often have served in communities alongside torture survivors, and several have experienced dehumanizing torture themselves. We acknowledge the suffering of those who were the victims of this torture program and their families, we apologize for our complacency, and we denounce the use of torture as barbaric and wrong.

Pope Francis has urged Christians to do their part in condemning all forms of torture: *“Torturing people is a mortal sin. It’s a very serious sin ... I invite all Christians to engage and collaborate in abolishing torture and to support victims and their families.”* (June 23, 2014)

The Senate report exposes how our government abandoned moral standards and dishonored our national values of accountability, compassion, justice and human rights. We allowed a government agency to kidnap and torture individuals in secret prisons, built in foreign countries and, as the report shows, paid for with bribes given to foreign officials.

We now know the truth about the CIA’s torture program – the truth that the CIA and others fought to conceal. We know that, in the name of national security, the program was not only brutal, but also illegal and immoral. President Obama officially dismantled the “enhanced interrogation” program in 2009, but Congress should act to ensure that the CIA never tortures anyone ever again.

How we respond as a nation to the fact that we tortured is essential. If we are to be a nation that values life and respects human dignity, we must not look away or remain silent. We must demand that the stain of torture be removed from our nation’s present and future. Only then will we be on the path toward justice, peace and reconciliation.

- 30 -

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