

Last Leg

The stench of death is heavier in the air these past few weeks, as the clock counts down to the execution of one of my neighbors. (3-4 death warrants were signed yesterday.) A friend of mine is on his last leg, but his warrant hasn't been signed yet. He doesn't have much time left. His last round of appeals are over, and he's looking for a "Hail Mary" to stop his execution.

We sat talking about his options, which are very slim. I did not know what to say, so I just encouraged him to keep hope alive, and I listened. There's always a chance, but don't take what time he had left for granted. I wish I could reassure him that it would be alright, but how could I, the State is determined to murder all of us.

I thought I would've been out of here after my first appeal back in 1998, but the State Courts seems to have other ideas about that. My appeals, up to now, has been ridiculously denied by the State Courts. Just like most cases in here, I present a very valid claim (e.g., ineffective counsel and/or prosecutorial misconduct) and I'm just waved off as "not prejudicial enough." And the years just tick away while they toy with our lives.

Over the many years, many of us have gone through the stress of a signed death warrant. These death warrants were signed ceremoniously to gain some political "brownie" points, under the guise of being tough on crime, albeit we still had many more appeals to file. No one was really being executed unless they gave up on their appeals (and some did), and they were often mentally ill.

Many have died from natural causes, while others have attempted to take their own lives after falling mentally ill due to their incarceration. It's been difficult witnessing their declines. Medical wasn't very helpful, for their eye was always on the bottom line.

How do I comfort the soul of a friend who's staring at the end of the road? I could testify about God's love. But that would seem only hollow to someone who can only see their demise. Facing death full of regret (unfulfilled & unredeemed) leaves a hole in a man's soul. I can only hope that letting him know that I care and keeping fellowship with him can be enough to help him until the end.

