February 24, 2022

Dear President Biden:

Like you, we are people of faith and spirit, holding life itself as the most sacred of gifts. Also like you, many of us are Catholic, taught by the Catechism that conscience lives within each person's heart "as a law inscribed by God."

Respectfully and urgently, we ask you to search your own conscience – and to grant immediate clemency to Leonard Peltier, expediting his release from the Coleman Federal Correctional Complex in Florida.

In 1977, Leonard Peltier (Anishinaabe/Dakota) received two consecutive life sentences following a confrontation among plain-clothes FBI agents, members of the American Indian Movement, and others present at the Jumping Bull Ranch on June 26, 1975.

While there is much public conversation about the lack of evidence against Mr. Peltier, as well as Mr. Peltier's 20-plus year eligibility for parole, one truth remains undisputed:

Mr. Peltier's prison sentence was never meant to be a death sentence.

We are deeply aggrieved that such a reality could be imminent. At age 77, Mr. Peltier has contracted COVID-19 in prison, while he also suffers from diabetes, a heart condition, a potentially-lethal abdominal aortic aneurysm, and other health complications.

We join with Pope Francis, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the World Council of Churches, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, the Unitarian Universalist Association, Episcopal Church of North Carolina, and countless people of faith and conscience around the world, in calling for Mr. Peltier's immediate release and clemency.

May history remember that your conscience, as well as your deep faith, led you to send Leonard Peltier home to the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, North Dakota, allowing him to be reunited with his loved ones and spiritual advisors in his final years.

Sincerely,

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