NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Trying to stop an execution

Heidi Schlumpf | Mar. 13, 2012 NCR Today

After a social justice project at her church several years ago, a fellow Catholic writer I know began corresponding with a young man on Mississippi's Death Row.

My friend never considered whether Larry Matthew Puckett [1] was guilty or not; she assumed he had sexually assaulted and murdered a 28-year-old woman in 1996, when he was just barely 18 years old, as the Department of Corrections website claimed.

A convert to Catholicism, Puckett impressed my friend with his intelligence and thoughtfulness. He liked to read science fiction books she sent, as well as the books of Jesuit prayers. He tried his hand at writing essays and got involved with some literary efforts from prison.

Now he is scheduled to die by lethal injection at 6 p.m. March 20.

And my friend--and others--are trying to stop the state from killing him.

According to a petition at change.org [2] that has nearly 4,000 signatures, Puckett was an Eagle Scout who was scheduled to leave for the Navy the week after this crime was committed. His family and friends maintain his innocence.

My colleague didn't know Puckett back then, but she has corresponded with him for several years and believes he at least deserves life in prison without parole.

As Sister Helen Prejean so poignantly pointed out in her book, *Dead Man Walking* [3], when those on Death Row are faceless, it's so easy to forget about them or assume they are monsters. I dare you: click here [2]and see Matt Puckett's face.

Then email Mississippi's governor at: info@governorbryant.com or sign the petition at change.org. [2]

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[1] http://www.clarionledger.com/article/20120302/NEWS/203020332/2-executions-scheduled-this-month?odyssey=tab|mostpopular|text|FRONTPAGE
[2] https://www.change.org/petitions/save-matt-puckett-stop-an-innocent-man-from-being-executed
[3] http://www.amazon.com/Dead-Man-Walking-Eyewitness-Account/dp/0679403582/ref=tmm_hrd_title_0?ie=UTF8&qid=1331690725&sr=8-6