

An Invitation from the Catholic Bishops of Ohio

April 2015

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Murder rightly evokes moral outrage and a call for justice. It also calls for spiritual healing and caring support for all those impacted by such a tragedy. Just punishment - punishment that reflects the seriousness of the offense, seeks restoration for the offense, and protects society - is a foundational moral principle within our justice system.

Just punishment can occur without resorting to the death penalty. As stated by Pope Francis, “It is impossible to imagine that states today cannot make use of another means than capital punishment to defend peoples’ lives from an unjust aggressor.” We Catholic Bishops of Ohio have consistently advocated for an end to the use of the death penalty. We seek mercy because we believe that spiritual conversion is possible and that all life, even that of the worst offender, has value and dignity.

Today, given the means available to the State for dealing with crime, cases where it is absolutely necessary to use the death penalty are practically nonexistent. In other states and countries, life imprisonment has shown itself to be an effective alternative.

We invite you to participate in this outreach of prayer, education and advocacy to end the use of the death penalty. We are pleased to partner with Ohioans to Stop Executions and the Catholic Mobilizing Network on this important project.

May God bless our efforts.

Catholic Bishops of Ohio