



The Catholic bishops of Nebraska invite all people of goodwill to join them in their continued opposition to the death penalty.

Justice requires punishment, but it does not require that those who have committed serious crimes be put to death. The death penalty does not provide rehabilitation to convicted criminals. There is no clear evidence that executions deter crime. Racial minorities and the poor are disproportionately sentenced to death, often as a consequence of racial bias or inadequate defense due to an inability to pay for better representation. Other means are available to punish criminals and to protect society that are more respectful of human life.

For the Catholic community, this issue – like all life issues – involves more than public policy. It involves our faith and the central principle that human life is sacred. Reflection on the God-given dignity of every human person should guide all our decisions about life, including refraining from the use of the death penalty. This is the message Nebraska’s three bishops will take to the state’s 375,000 Catholics in the coming year to encourage support for upholding the prohibition of the death penalty.

Most Rev. George J. Lucas, Archbishop of Omaha
Most Rev. James D. Conley, Bishop of Lincoln
Most Rev. Joseph G. Hanefeldt, Bishop Grand Island

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