



Catholic Bishops of Kansas Call for Less Violence and No State Executions

The Catholic bishops of Kansas stand in resolute solidarity with all who have suffered from acts of violent crime, holding a special place in our hearts for the families of Kansans whose lives were brutally taken. We acknowledge the unspeakable pain of these losses, and we firmly support the heroic work of our law enforcement and judicial professionals who work tirelessly to keep our communities safe and peaceful. True justice must always aim for the healing of victims and the preservation of public safety.

At the same time, we must speak out against the inherent violence and inhumanity of the death penalty, particularly when such an extreme measure is entirely unnecessary to protect society. While capital punishment has been legal in Kansas since 1994, our state has fortunately avoided its use.

As the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches, *"the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person."* Sacred Scripture clearly admonishes against *"repaying anyone evil for evil,"* and warns that we should not *"be conquered by evil but conquer evil with good"* (Romans 12:17,21). Even for those who do not look to the Church as an authority, this principle provides a moral benchmark for the common good.

Therefore, we respectfully urge Governor Laura Kelly to exercise the authority of her office to commute current death sentences to life in prison. By sparing Kansas from the violence of an execution, we align our actions with the highest values of a peaceful, civilized society. We call on Catholics and all people of goodwill to pray and act to break cycles of violence, while offering our unyielding, compassionate support to everyone affected by crime. *"The Lord is close to the broken hearted, saves those whose spirit is crushed"* (Psalm 34:10).



+ Shawn McKnight

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