

New Mexico Conference of Catholic Bishops



Archdiocese of Santa Fe, Most Reverend John C. Wester, M.Div., M.A.S., M.A.

Most Reverend Michael J. Sheehan, S.T.L., J.C.D., Archbishop Emeritus

Diocese of Las Cruces, Most Reverend Oscar Cantú, S.T.D.

Diocese of Gallup, Most Reverend James S. Wall

Most Reverend Ricardo Ramirez, C.S.B., D.D., Bishop Emeritus of Las Cruces

P.O. Box 3243 * Los Lunas, NM 87031 * (505) 319 – 3334

STATEMENT

NM Bishops Renounce Governor's Call to Reinstate Death Penalty August 18, 2016

The Catholic Bishops of New Mexico applauded the State Legislature for the progress that was made when we ended the morally untenable practice of the death penalty on March 18, 2009. This repeal of the death penalty was a milestone, moving New Mexico from a culture of violence to a culture of peace, justice, and love.

We, the Catholic Bishops of New Mexico, in one voice, once again echo the teaching of the Church that life is sacred. There is one seamless teaching on God's gift of life that must be protected from conception in the womb to natural death. It is always tragic and sad when a member of the community is murdered. These senseless acts must be prevented by calling for systemic change in society beginning with our youngest children. Crime can be prevented, and this is done by an investment in social capital.

The State created life in prison without the possibility of parole. This renders a perpetrator harmless to society.

Catechism of the Catholic Church 2267

"If, instead, bloodless means are sufficient to defend against the aggressor and to protect the safety of persons, public authority should limit itself to such means, because they better correspond to the concrete conditions of the common good and are more in conformity to the dignity of the human person."

"Today, in fact, given the means at the State's disposal to effectively repress crime by rendering inoffensive the one who has committed it, without depriving him definitively of the possibility of redeeming himself, cases of absolute necessity for suppression of the offender today...are very rare, if not practically non-existent." [John Paul II, Evangelium vitae 56.]

We join Pope Francis in his continued call to end the practice of the death penalty. Pope Benedict and St. Pope John Paul II both worked diligently to end the death penalty throughout the world. The trend in the United States has now been to abandon the use of the death penalty. In the last five years, five states have passed legislation to repeal their death penalty law.

We oppose Governor Susana Martinez' plan to reinstate the death penalty and call on the Legislature to reject the legislation.