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Human Rights Day
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Death Penalty Prayer Vigil For the Dignity of Every Person

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Lord, for many years we, Sisters of the Precious Blood, have worked and prayed for the elimination of the death penalty. The words from Genesis 1: 26-27 are a motivating force for taking this stand as a Congregation.

God said: “Let us make human beings in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the tame animals, all the wild animals, and all the creatures that crawl on the earth.” God created mankind in his image; in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. (The American Bible)

We believe that each and every person is created in God’s own image and likeness and this gives a special dignity to each and every human person, even someone who has committed a serious crime. How humbling to realize God’s great love for us and for each and every person! Our faith teaches us to respect and love every person because he/she is the image of God. Jesus asks us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

However, as we begin to think beyond family, friends, co-workers, neighbors it becomes more difficult at times to see or believe that some people are made in the image and likeness of God. It seems as though “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth” is more rooted in our being than love for our neighbor

Jesus calls us to let go of the old law and to accept the law of love because each individual is created in the image and likeness of God, because each person is precious in God's eyes.

Our Catholic Church calls us to be Pro Life, not only regarding the issue of abortion, but from the beginning of life until death. Therefore, the Church advocates for the end of the death penalty. Lord, when we look carefully at who receives the death penalty we discover that most of them are people of color, they are poor and have not been able to afford a good lawyer. Many have mental health problems or intellectual disabilities. Sometimes we discover that a person who was put to death was not even guilty of the crime for which he/she was executed. Help us, Lord, to convince society that the death penalty is not the solution to violent crimes

It saddens us, Lord, that the State of Ohio where our Congregation is located has not yet abolished the death penalty. We continue to dream and hope that Ohio's legislators will pass a bill ending the execution of prisoners. Help us along with so many others to continue to work for the end of the death penalty in our country.

AMEN