**Corporate Stand Statement Against the Death Penalty**

**Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, Los Angeles Province**

We, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet in the Los Angeles Province, voice a strong opposition to the death penalty. We commit ourselves to work for its abolition as a matter of conscience, morality and respect of the dignity of every human life. Therefore, we believe that neither we, not the state in our name, has the right to take human life. Violence is not the answer to the problem of violence. While decrying the taking of life with the death penalty, we concurrently decry the loss of innocent life, mourn with, and reach out to the families of victims of violent crime.

Together we call upon our elected leaders to put an end to state-sanctioned killing. Furthermore, we call upon our sisters and brothers in our parishes, ministries and neighborhoods to join us in working toward the abolition of the death penalty. We invite all people of good will to choose moral courage over fear and to search for creative solutions to questions of crime and punishment.

We believe that together we can create truly just solutions that respect the human dignity of each and every member of society.

In making this statement:

* We profess to always move towards a love of neighbor without distinction and to work for unity of neighbor with neighbor.
* We grieve and reach out to victims of violent crime and their families.
* We acknowledge the natural fear created by the violent atmosphere in many of our communities and neighborhoods.
* We affirm that the people in our communities are entitled to protection from those who would do no harm.
* We acknowledge that violent actions have consequences, and that offenders should be held accountable.
* We affirm that within our system of justice there is need for restitution to victims and their loved ones and rehabilitation of the offender
* We believe that “legal” murder does not teach that killing is wrong. The state should not commit the very act which it condemns.
* We believe that every execution sends out a negative message about the value of human life and numbs society further to the realities of hatred and violence—a numbness that distracts from the active pursuit of effective solutions.

December 10, 1998

**Implementation of Corporate Stand on Abolishing the Death Penalty**

Each sister will try to implement at least two:

* 1. Educate myself and others about the issue of the death penalty.

1. Write or visit a prisoner on death row.
2. Seek opportunities to discuss the issue with family, friends, co-workers, etc. While I may not change their views, I may get them to re-examine the death penalty.
   1. Have prayer services in my community/place of ministry for murder victim's families.
   2. Clip out newspaper notices of victims of violent crimes and send them a note of support.
   3. Take a visual stand. Wear a T-shirts or button, or place a bumper sticker on my car stating that I am against the death penalty.
   4. Find out about restorative justice. Find ways to participate in my area.
   5. Invite a speaker to my church, school or community organization and organize study groups.
   6. Be a speaker at my church, school or community organization.
      1. Support/join organizations who oppose the death penalty.
      2. Pray daily for an end to the death penalty.
      3. Read "Dead Man Walking" by Helen Prejean, CSJ.
         1. Write letters, visit, make phone calls to my elected officials about abolishing the death

penalty; against expanding crimes which merit the death penalty.

1. Pray for persons on death row and healing for families of persons who were victims of violent crimes.
2. Write letters to the editor of my newspaper about the death penalty.
   1. Attend the prayer vigil in my area on the night before an execution in my state.
   2. Consider signing the Declaration of Life, which states that, should I be the victim of crime,

I would not want my murderer to receive the death penalty. Invite others to consider signing.

* 1. When someone is up for execution in one of our states, write governor for a stay of execution.

1. As a local community have a prayer service on the day of execution for the person being executed and for the family of the victim.
2. Participate in prayer vigils or other public events protesting the death penalty.
3. Call in to talk shows about the death penalty.
4. Other ideas...