

September 9, 2020

Most Reverend José H. Gomez
Archdiocese of Los Angeles
3424 Wilshire Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90010-2241

Dear Archbishop Gomez:

We, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet in the Los Angeles Province, write to you as our Archbishop and Chair of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. As a community, we are compelled to live our identity as a Congregation of the Great love of God and our charism moving towards a love of God and neighbor without distinction. Therefore, we voice a strong opposition to the death penalty.

We are deeply concerned and express our objection to Attorney General Barr receiving the Christifidelis Laici Award at a Catholic Prayer Breakfast. He has scheduled federal executions and his position on the death penalty directly opposes Church teaching. Pope Francis recently updated Catholic teaching on the death penalty, stating that, in light of the teachings of Christ, this deliberate taking of life is "an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the human person."

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops stated in their Pastoral, *A Culture of Life and the Death Penalty*: "We reaffirm our common judgment that the use of the death penalty is unnecessary and unjustified in our time and circumstances."

It is difficult for us to understand how Bishop Robert Barron from the Los Angeles Archdiocese consented to give the keynote at this event. He is giving legitimacy to a man who is either unaware of church teaching on the death penalty or has disregarded the sacredness of all human life. In February 2020 the USCCB issued *In Forming Consciences for Faith Citizenship*. It states: 'Catholic teaching about the dignity of life calls us to.... end the use of the death penalty' (45)

We affirm our belief that all life is sacred and therefore oppose the death penalty and those who support it.

Sincerely,
The Leadership Team of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet

Sr. Patricia Nelson Sr. Mary Ann Mary Sr. Maureen O'Connor
Sr. Adele O'Sullivan Sr. Kathryn Mary Stein