

**STATEMENT ON THE DEATH PENALTY**  
**issued by the**  
**COUNCIL OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS**  
**OF METROPOLITAN CHICAGO**

The Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago states its strong opposition to the death penalty. While we agonize over the pain criminals inflict on innocent victims, and we want to do everything possible to prevent violent crime, there is no evidence that capital punishment is an effective deterrent to violent crime. Indeed, states with the death penalty have no better record on violent crime than those without it.

It is apparent that capital punishment satisfies only a need for vengeance, a motive that is unacceptable to those who believe that human life is sacred. Scripture tells us, "vengeance is mine. I will repay, says the Lord." There is no morality when a society responds to violence with violent solutions.

There are many alternatives to capital punishment.

Of course, the most available is life imprisonment without parole.

Study and reflect on the causes of violent crime and work to prevent it.

Develop adequate care for those who are victims of violent crime.

Teach the meaning of peace, forgiveness and healing as the foundation  
human life.

We seek a society of justice and peace and believe that capital punishment does not lead toward either.