



DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH  
THE BISHOP'S OFFICE



Dear Brother Priests and Deacons,

Please take time to read with prayerful consideration the attached letter from Bishop Daniel Flores of the Diocese of Brownsville about the request of the Holy Father that we pray for the abolition of the Death Penalty throughout the world. I ask that you consider encouraging the men and women of your parishes and schools to include this intention in their prayers, especially the Rosary, throughout September as a lead into the month of October, the month that is dedicated to Respect Life throughout the Church in the United States. I plan on offering my own guidance to the entire diocese in the coming weeks.

On October 10, 2016, I joined with my brother bishops of the State of Texas in observing in the pastoral statement of our Catholic Conference the following: 1) the death penalty is disproportionately used on the poor, racial minorities and the vulnerable, including persons of limited mental capacity, 2) scarce public resources are devoted to the death penalty, thus injuring the common good. The cost of housing and feeding a prisoner for a life sentence is three times lower than the court costs incurred by lengthy appeals for a prisoner on death row, and 3) people not guilty of the crimes for which they were convicted are too frequently killed by the government on our behalf.

As you know, in 2017 the Holy Father further developed the Church's moral teaching regarding the Death Penalty as "inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person." (See, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #2267) It is especially important for the Church in Texas to bring this intention into our prayers that we might come to a better understanding of this development in moral doctrine and might more fully proclaim the Gospel of Life in all its truth as Christians in our own ongoing conversion and that of our society.

While the Death Penalty is not an inherently evil action like Abortion or Euthanasia, these three social policies contribute to our society's ingratitude and insensitivity for God's precious gift of human life. They help us to become indifferent and to abandon our responsibility to be accountable to each other as just members of a society by disposing of human beings in misguided attempts to redress moral and social evils like poverty, crime, domestic abuse, and terminal illness. I thank you for your pastoral attention to this important matter and for your prayers and generous ministry to God's Holy People, the Church. With prayers for you, I remain,

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

+ *Michael F. Olson*

Most Reverend Michael F. Olson, S.T.D. M.A.  
Bishop of Fort Worth