

## **AFSC Religious Organizing Against the Death Penalty Project**

The Religious Organizing Against the Death Penalty Project seeks to build a powerful coalition of faith-based activists. Nationally, it works with official religious bodies to develop strategies and to promote anti-death penalty activism within each faith tradition. At the grassroots level, the Project links with individuals and faith communities, establishing "covenant" relationships to foster local abolition efforts.

The work of the Religious Organizing Against the Death Penalty Project comprises four central components:

### **Education**

One of the Project's major functions is to provide individuals and faith groups with religiously oriented anti-death penalty materials. Resources available include:

- Dead Man Walking study packets
- a compilation of national religious bodies' statements on the death penalty
- a compendium of powerful sermons against the death penalty
- educational videos for people of faith
- national conferences and smaller gatherings that provide training and inspiration

### **Commitment**

We provide individuals and communities of faith with tangible ways of expressing their opposition to the death penalty. These include:

- signing the declaration of life, a pledge to express one's individual opposition to capital punishment
- developing a statement to reflect one's faith community's opposition to the death penalty
- becoming a member of the Religious Organizing Project
- designing action plans for working for the abolition of the death penalty
- signing the moratorium petition

### **Ministry**

The Project works with individuals whose lives are deeply touched by the specter of the death penalty. We help faith communities:

- to address the needs of murder victims so that true healing may occur
- to reach out to family members of those on death row, the "invisible victims" of the death penalty
- to assist death row inmates in a variety of ways

## **Action**

We provide people of faith with tangible ways to work for the abolition of the death penalty. We help individuals and groups to:

- organize anti-death penalty demonstrations and vigils
- publicly challenge politicians and prosecutors who support the death penalty
- testify and lobby against the death penalty
- monitor capital cases to witness against injustice in the courtroom
- develop a strong anti-death penalty voice in the media

Each of us can make a meaningful contribution. People of faith helped spearhead the first abolitionist movement in the United States—the movement to abolish slavery. The time is long overdue for the religious community to play a decisive role in the second abolitionist movement—the movement to abolish the death penalty.

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## **California People of Faith Working Against the Death Penalty**

California People of Faith Working Against the Death Penalty works to educate and mobilize faith communities to act to abolish the death penalty in California. CPF is a nonpartisan, statewide, interfaith organization. We reach out to all citizens regardless of faith, race, ethnic group, income, political affiliation, age or ability. Our members include Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, and people from other faith traditions. As communities of faith, we join together to take responsibility for the killing of our citizens by the State of California.

We work with faith communities across California, taking on serious questions from the points of view of the community, victims and offenders. We are deeply disturbed by violent crime and by the suffering of its victims and their families. We work closely with Murder Victims Families for Human Rights and Murder Victims Families for Reconciliation. We recognize and remember the victims.

As people of faith, we know that the God/Wisdom of all faiths calls us to something more: a high and often difficult standard of love, forgiveness and justice that is rooted not in retribution but rather in redemption and

restoration. The death penalty denies the sacredness of human life. Spiritually, the death penalty diminishes us all.

We believe the death penalty is not and never will be the solution to violence in our society. The death penalty system is inequitable and unfair in its implementation. It is racist, predisposed to executing the poor and destitute among us. It is more costly than life imprisonment. Thus, it drains society's resources that could be used for the promotion of authentic justice and true healing.

As we invest in vengeance in this society, we divest ourselves of compassion. As we support retribution, we neglect restorative justice. We cannot be a community of compassion and unity if we choose to destroy one another. And we should not allow the state to do it for us.

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**Catholics Against Capital Punishment**

Catholics Against Capital Punishment was founded in 1992 to promote greater awareness of Catholic Church teachings that characterize capital punishment as unnecessary, inappropriate and unacceptable in today's world. It does this in the following ways:

- By disseminating news of Catholic-oriented anti-death penalty efforts through its newsletter, CACP News Notes, and this website.
- By communicating the Church's teachings on the issue to federal and state lawmakers, especially those who are Catholic, urging them to resist proposed legislation imposing or extending the use of the death penalty, and to work for repeal of such laws currently on the books.
- By encouraging members of the Catholic hierarchy, clergy and religious groups to speak out more forcefully against capital punishment.

Visit us at: <http://www.cacp.org>

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## **The Catholic Campaign to End the Use of the Death Penalty**

Welcome to the Catholic Campaign to End the Use of the Death Penalty. Within our website, you will find everything you need to know about the Catholic Church's involvement in ending the use of the death penalty.

While the U.S. Catholic bishops have been calling for an end to the use of the death penalty for 25 years, this new Campaign was launched in March of 2005. The first comprehensive U.S. Catholic bishops' statement on the topic was issued in 1980. In this campaign, the bishops renew their call in order to seize a new moment and a new momentum. This is a time to teach clearly, encourage reflection, and call for common action in the Catholic community. To that end, the bishops have written a new pastoral statement that will clarify Church teaching and assist the numerous individual bishops and state Catholic conferences that have issued similar calls to end the use of the death penalty

<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/national/deathpenalty/>

Email us at [deathpenalty@usccb.org](mailto:deathpenalty@usccb.org)

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## **The Buddhist Peace Fellowship Prison Project**

The BPF Prison Program is deeply committed to working with prisoners, their families, and all other persons associated with the prison system to address the systemic violence within the prison-industrial complex.

[http://www.bpf.org/html/current\\_projects/prison\\_program/prison\\_program.html](http://www.bpf.org/html/current_projects/prison_program/prison_program.html)

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