



**CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE
OF KENTUCKY**

For Immediate
Release

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Catholic Conference of KY Commends Commutation of Death Sentence that Advances a Culture of Life

The Catholic Conference of Kentucky commends Governor Fletcher's commutation of the sentence of death to life without parole of the brain damaged Jeffrey Leonard who was represented by a lawyer who was subsequently disbarred and indicted and who did not even know Mr. Leonard's name at the time of his trial. Ed Monahan, Executive Director said, "This decision honors the sacredness of human life while holding Mr. Leonard accountable for his behavior and insuring the safety of our communities. This decision is a sign of hope as it recognizes that human life must never be taken away, even in the case of someone who has done great evil."

Monahan said "We share the justified anger and revulsion at the terrible and deadly crime committed by Mr. Leonard. We do not underestimate the pain of the victims, the families and friends of the victims. Their anguish is unfathomable. They deserve our compassion, solidarity, and support. In commending the commutation to life without parole, we do not seek to diminish the evil and harm caused by those who commit horrible murders. We share the hurt and horror, the loss and the heartache that are the results of unspeakable acts of violence. Standing with families of victims, however, does not compel support for death as a penalty."

As stated in *A Culture of Life and the Penalty of Death*, Statement of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (2005), the bishops believe that the state should forgo the use of the death penalty because:

In our time and circumstances the sanction of death is not necessary to protect society, and it violates respect for human life and dignity.

State-sanctioned killing in our names diminishes all of us.

The application of the death penalty is deeply flawed and is biased by factors such as race, the quality of legal representation, and the area where the crime was committed and adjudicated. When an error is made, and this punishment is applied, it is irreversible.

We have other ways to punish criminals and protect society.

Ending the death penalty is a mandate of a true culture of life.

Edward C. Monahan
Executive Director
Catholic Conference of KY

The Catholic Conference of Kentucky (CCK) is an agency of the Catholic Bishops of Kentucky, established in 1968. It speaks for the Church in matters of public policy, serves as liaison to government and the legislature, and coordinates communications and activities between the church and secular agencies. There are 406,000 Catholics in the Commonwealth. The Bishops of the four dioceses of KY constitute CCK's Board of Directors.