**Domestic Justice Chairman Welcomes Change in Catechism Calling for Abolition of the Death Penalty**

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WASHINGTON--Following the publication of the revised section of the Catechism of the Catholic Church regarding the death penalty, Bishop Frank J. Dewane of Venice, Florida, Chairman of the USCCB's Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, welcomed the change and echoed the call to end the death penalty in the United States.

The full statement follows:

"Today, we welcome the Holy Father's decision to revise the Catechism and its explanation of the Church's teaching on the death penalty.  All human beings are created in the image and likeness of God, and the dignity bestowed on them by the Creator cannot be extinguished, even by grave sin, such that all persons, from conception until natural death possess inalienable dignity and value that points to their origin as sons and daughters of God.  The new section in the Catechism is consistent with the statements of Pope Francis' teaching on the death penalty, including his 2015 address to the U.S. Congress, as well as the statements of his predecessors.  Pope Benedict the XVI urged 'the attention of society's leaders to the need to make every effort to eliminate the death penalty,' and Pope St. John Paul II observed that 'Not even a murderer loses his personal dignity, and God himself pledges to guarantee this."

"For decades, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has called for the end of the death penalty in the United States.  As the revised Catechism states, "more effective systems of detention...which ensure the due protection of citizens: exist, ones that also maintain the human dignity of all.  It is our hope that today's announcement will bring new attention to this critical issue, and speed along the end of this practice, which, as Pope Francis has said, in the light of the Gospel, is 'inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person.'"

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