

Pastor's Column

Proposition 34—California End the Death Penalty Act

The California Conference of Catholic Bishops is supporting Proposition 34 which will be on the ballot in the November Election.

Included in today's Bulletin is an insert stating the position of the California Bishops for your consideration as you prepare to vote in November.

I share with you a Pastor's Column that I wrote in May 2001. Through this reflection, I present one way which may help us to decide that the death penalty should be abolished.

Timothy McVeigh and "The Hound of Heaven"*

**"The Hound of Heaven," a poem, by Francis Thompson, 1859-1907*

Timothy, my son! Why? For what reason? How could you, with such calm and reason, kill 168 innocent people, especially infants and children? Doesn't life mean anything to you?

I know that you were trying to make a point, trying to get your perspective across to the world. I know it had to do with Waco, Texas, and the Branch Davidians. But taking revenge on innocent people in Oklahoma City is not justifiable. I do not understand the logic. Two wrongs do not make a right! Killing people in order to say that killing people is wrong just doesn't make sense to me!

Timothy, I continue to love you. You are my son. I created you. I love you just as much as I love those 168 men, women, and children whose lives you cut short. They are with me now in my Reign, but they still had so much life to live! Some of them were going to make tremendous contributions to society.

You didn't know, of course, but one of the infants you killed was going to find the ultimate cure for cancer. Now it will take decades more before that happens. And another child would have created the technology to harness the sun's energy. In your lifetime, solar energy would have ended the need for nuclear power, coal, oil, and natural gas. Now it will take several more lifetimes before that happens. And in the meantime, nuclear waste is going to cause much damage to the human race and environment.

You killed those gifts when you killed those children. You took away my rightful opportunities to work with and inspire those people on behalf of the human race that I love so much. You do not yet understand that life is my gift. Life belongs to me. It is not yours to take, for any reason.

Timothy, my son, you must be held accountable for your actions. I am compassion and love, but I also am justice. Your life spent for its entirety in prison is the price for your actions. It will never equal, in punishment and pain, what you did, but it is the most just response, from a human perspective.

You do not know this yet, Timothy, but your years in prison will be the space in which a great gift will be created and given to the human race. I am the **Hound of Heaven**. I am not going to give up on you. And you know what? Finally, after many years, you will open your arms wide to my love. You will experience an earth-shattering conversion. Your years in prison will be a time of great spiritual growth. Your discoveries about the gifts of my life and love will be shared with the world through the books you will write and the speeches you will give from your prison cell. Your immense sin will result in profound virtue and gift for the human race. Believe it or not, because of your unwavering witness to the gift of life from your prison cell, you will help more and more people to appreciate life. Amazingly, your witness will help to bring an end to the legalization of abortion in the United States, because the law will no longer reflect the beliefs of most Americans.

Oh, but Timothy, my son, this will never happen, because my people are doing to you what you did to my 168 loved ones! You are being killed in order to send the message that killing is wrong. That just doesn't make sense to me.

I am being deprived of my opportunity to be the **Hound of Heaven** and to bring you into my circle of light and love. I just need more time with you. They are taking that time away from me just as you took that time away from the 168 in Oklahoma City.

How the world suffers and deprives itself of what I can do for it when anyone cuts life short.

I am so sad. I want to love all of you into peace, joy, and freedom, but you, humans, keep killing my chances to help.

Please, please, my people! Stop depriving me of my opportunities to be the **Hound of Heaven**.

Please let me be God!

F. Mike

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