

VINCENTIAN FAMILY STATEMENT

LIFE NOT DEATH: NO TO DEATH PENALTY

AUGUST 15, 2020

"I alone, am God. It is I who deal death and give life." (Deuteronomy 32:39)

WE, the VINCENTIAN FAMILY in the Philippines register our strong opposition to the plan of President Duterte to reimpose death penalty in the country. It is with deep sadness and frustration that the reinstatement of capital punishment is also supported by the Legislature. Death penalty is contrary to our Christian faith. It is against the Gospel principles of respect for human life, mercy and compassion, justice and forgiveness, hope and charity. Life is sacred. It is a precious gift from God. Our faith professes that no one, the State included, has the right to take it away. God is the author of life. We owe our life to Him. Any assault and disrespect of any human person, the image of God, is an attack on God. "The first human right," Pope Francis says, "is the right to life."

We believe that the poor and the least privileged are most vulnerable and most inclined to be the victims of wrongful convictions and accusations with the passage of this bill. With the current judicial system which favors the elite and the powerful, the death penalty will impact the ordinary people and poor communities. Access to due process is hard to come by for they can never afford good lawyers.

The imposition of death penalty could weaken our democratic institutions. It can silence dissent, stifle the political opposition and human rights defenders in the name of national security and protection. Moreover, there is no statistical evidence that death penalty is deterrence to crime at all. We believe that justice should be served. Penalty must be given for crimes committed. But death penalty is not the way to redress social wrong.

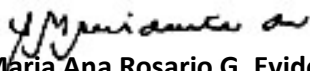
- We call on the government and our lawmakers to craft laws and offer a more humane, immediate and better solutions in order not to marginalize the poor.
- We urge our lawmakers to enact systematic reforms of our justice system to eliminate corruption and delay of basic services to the needy.
- We urge our President, our government and public servants to uplift the people from poverty as one reasons for crime is poverty, as well as to stamp out impunity; to offer offenders rehabilitation instead of capital punishment to restore life, give them hope and bring them back to their human community and to God.
- We call on all people of good will, our mission partners, collaborators and those we serve to fight injustice and discrimination, defend human life and dignity, and promote social equality and due process.
- We urge our Filipino people to support petitions against death penalty and to stand for life not death.

St. Vincent reminds Missioners, Daughters, members of the Vincentian family and mission partners that "there is no act of charity that is not accompanied by justice". He calls on us to

defend the just and the noble human rights defended by all. He compels us to be beside people who have nothing, those who are considered to be rejects of society and stripped of their human dignity. "Let us hunger and thirst for that justice", St. Vincent urges us.

#RESIST DEATH PENALTY
#DEFEND LIFE AND HUMAN RIGHTS
#NO TO REIMPOSITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY

Signed:


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AND ALL MEMBERS OF THE VINCENTIAN FAMILY