



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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The Honorable Douglas A. Ducey
Governor of Arizona
1700 West Washington Street
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

November 2, 2020

Dear Governor Ducey,

I write to you today regarding the executions in the State of Arizona that you are being urged to “expeditiously” reinstate by Attorney General Brnovich. I understand that your time is valuable, but the issue is urgent.

The idea that we argue the value of life on one hand but continue to devalue it in our basic systems of government seems archaic and hypocritical. The facts bear this out.

- There is a great possibility that innocent persons may be executed. In Arizona alone in the last 50 years, nine death row inmates have been exonerated and released. Nationally, more than 170 people have been released from death row with evidence of their innocence during that period of time. We should have no confidence in a system that results in so many fatal errors.
- Given those statistics, it is likely that one or more innocent persons have been executed here in Arizona.
 - An execution removes any chance of righting this wrong.
 - Is not executing an innocent person murder?
- Every major religion has some article of faith that speaks against murder or killing.
 - The United Methodist Church stands solidly against the death penalty.
 - Pope Francis’ October 3, 2020 encyclical, entitled *Fratelli Tutti*, rejected capital punishment as a “false answer[] that ... ultimately do[es] no more than introduce new elements of destruction in the fabric of national and global society.”
 - There needs to be a consistent ethic of life. Pro life means all life.
- Attorney General Brnovich, wrote to you saying, “Justice must be done...” How is an execution justice?
 - Does it cancel out the crime?
 - No. It adds to it.
 - Does it comfort the family?
 - No. Quite the contrary, families continue to grieve.

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- Justice would be better served helping the families face their grief so they can move on.
- Is the death penalty a deterrent to crime?
 - No. There are no statistics that uphold that theory.
 - Life in prison without parole is a better deterrent.
 - Money would be better spent on mental health care.
- The families of the victims are justifiably hurt and grief-stricken.
 - Some families are stuck in their grief and want you to move ahead with the executions.
 - But an execution is not justice. It is revenge.
 - An execution does not relieve bloodlust. It only adds to it.
 - Forgiveness is the only true cure for this kind of grief.
- You will not be executing monsters. You will be executing men and women. You will be executing any opportunity at redemption. And, in some instances, you will be executing innocent people.

Continuing with executions in the State of Arizona may be viewed as a law and order decision but it is not justice. It is not a legacy that I would choose to leave in this state, at this time – or ever.

Therefore, I request that you choose life over death, and that you stop the march to begin executing prisoners again.

Sincerely,

Bishop Robert T. Hoshibata
Resident Bishop

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