



ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS
Office of Communications and Planning

Statement from the Office of Respect Life, Family and Social Responsibility and the Peace and Justice Commission of the Archdiocese of St. Louis Regarding Scheduled Execution of Walter Barton

May 18, 2020 - On May 1, 2020, on behalf of the Missouri bishops and other religious and civic leaders, the Missouri Catholic Conference submitted a letter to Governor Mike Parson requesting clemency for Walter Barton, who is slated for execution on Tuesday, May 19. The Office of Respect Life, Family and Social Responsibility and the Peace and Justice Commission of the Archdiocese of St. Louis join Most Rev. Robert J. Carlson, Archbishop of St. Louis, along with other religious and civic and leaders, in urging the Governor of the State of Missouri to halt the execution of Walter Barton, to grant him clemency and to commute his sentence to life in prison.

Our faith in God calls us to choose life consistently, from conception through natural death, and to recognize that the dignity of the human person applies to all—from the very innocent to those guilty of criminal acts.

The death penalty is not consistent with our regard for life as people of God—it denigrates the very gift of life which we are taught to honor and preserve. Each time someone is put to death, we all suffer the loss of respect for the sanctity of human life—from the unborn, to the sick and disadvantaged, to the elderly and all of our fellow human beings. We must as Christians stand for life, and for God’s healing mercy and compassion.

The murder of Gladys Kuehler was a senseless act resulting in a tragic loss. Our prayers are with her family and all of her loved ones. However, state-sanctioned killing does not bring back lost lives—it furthers society’s lack of respect for all life.

The execution of Walter Barton must be halted so as to preserve the dignity of all of humanity.

More information about this issue can be found on the Missouri Catholic Conference website [here](#).

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