



600 Clark Ave
P.O. Box 1022
Jefferson City, MO 65102
P: 573-635-7239
F: 573-635-7431
E-mail: mocatholic@mocatholic.org

May 2, 2014

Honorable Jay Nixon
Governor
Missouri State Capitol, Room 216
Jefferson City, Mo 65101

Dear Governor Nixon,

Along with the rest of the nation, the Missouri Catholic Conference was horrified at the botched execution of Clayton Lockett on April 29 in Oklahoma. The manner in which Mr. Lockett died was neither humane nor constitutional. Similar problems occurred with an Ohio execution in January. Dennis McGuire struggled for air during the process, taking much longer than expected to expire.

~~A pattern is emerging that there are serious flaws with the lethal injection process in this country. This cannot be ignored.~~

As governor of the state of Missouri, I ask you to show leadership and prevent similar debacles from occurring in our state. I request that you halt all executions until a thorough, open investigation of Missouri's execution practices can be completed.

Like Oklahoma and Ohio, Missouri's execution practices are cloaked in secrecy. Missouri's execution protocol changes frequently, raising questions of reliability. Little is known about the quality of the drugs used or their supplier. The general public has no knowledge of the training or credentials of those carrying out executions in our state. Under these circumstances a botched execution is a very tragic possibility.

The Catholic bishops would strongly support your decision to enact a moratorium. Catholic teaching has long opposed the death penalty because it disregards the sanctity and dignity of the person while continuing the cycle of violence in society. Catholic teaching does support offenders being held accountable for their crimes, but maintains that society can adequately protect human life without the taking of another human life.

Enclosed is a recent statement issued by the Catholic Bishops of Missouri expressing their concern about the escalation of executions taking place in our state. The bishops call on all Missourians to acknowledge the sacredness of all human life and work to end executions in our state.

If Missouri carries out executions the public must be assured that they are done within a constitutional and due process framework. Therefore, I would urge you to promote the common good of our state by imposing a moratorium on executions, at least until assurances can be given that no condemned inmate will experience the tragic circumstances that took place in Oklahoma and Ohio.

Sincerely,

Mike Hoey
Executive Director