



From the Deacon's Desk

Pope Francis recently changed the Church's teaching on the death penalty; the Catechism of the Catholic Church [CCC] now reads:

"Consequently, the Church teaches, in the light of the Gospel, that the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person," and she works with determination for its abolition worldwide."

Francis' pronouncement is the culmination of modern efforts to abolish the death penalty that began with Saint John Paul II. He called it "cruel and unnecessary" and directed his papal representatives to oppose executions.

The initial CCC, published in 1992, affirmed a preference for bloodless penalties but allowed for the death penalty "in cases of extreme gravity." Then in 1997, the CCC's teaching on capital punishment changed to a near-refusal and stated that cases in which criminals should be deprived of redemption "are very rare, if not practically nonexistent."

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI made the church's opposition even firmer, vowing to abolish the death penalty and urging justice ministers to support efforts to eliminate it around the world.

"To always be close to Jesus, that's my plan."

Last July, Pope Francis named Carlo Acutis as "venerable" – moving him just one step away from sainthood. Carlos' story is important, particularly to young people. Born in London on 1991, he was raised in Italy where his parents worked. He was an exceptionally pious young man. Beginning with his first communion at seven, he often attended daily Mass and prayed the rosary daily. He led a normal life, playing soccer, designing and playing video games – he'll be the first saint to have played "Call of Duty" – designed websites, and designed comics. In addition to these activities, he worked in homeless shelters, took a special interest in classmates whose parents were divorcing, would not allow bullying, and sought out the friendless and the ones who didn't fit in. Early in 2006, he was diagnosed with an exceptionally aggressive form of Leukemia. He died in October of that year. He was just 15-years-old.

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