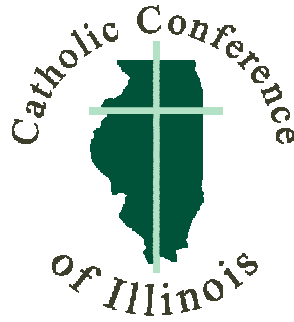


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**ABOLITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY BECOMES LAW IN ILLINOIS**  
**Catholic Conference of Illinois commends Governor's approval of Senate Bill 3539**

**March 9, 2011**

Today, Governor Quinn signed into law Senate Bill 3539 to abolish the death penalty in Illinois. The bill, which passed the General Assembly this past January, also will direct funding to services for victims' families and for law enforcement training. No longer will there be a risk in Illinois that an innocent person will be convicted and sentenced to death. The law becomes effective on July 1, 2011.

As we begin the Lenten season on this Ash Wednesday, and we reflect on the crucifixion of Jesus and the mystery of His death and resurrection, there is no better time for this landmark law to be approved. The end of the use of the death penalty advances the development of a culture of life in our state. Furthermore, society will continue to be protected and those who commit crimes will still be held accountable through alternatives to the death penalty, including life without parole.

The Catholic Conference of Illinois commends the Governor on his approval of this legislation and thanks all the fellow advocates and Illinois lawmakers who have supported the repeal of the death penalty in Illinois.

*The Catholic Conference of Illinois is the multi-issue public policy arm of the Catholic Church in Illinois.*