

5 December 2007

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Langevin Bldg.
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A2

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

The Permanent Council of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops is most concerned that you and the Government of Canada are prepared to accept the execution of Canadians by the jurisdictions of other countries.

It is basic Catholic teaching that the life and dignity of each human person must be respected and protected without exception. This should especially be true for democracies which are founded on respect for the rights and dignity of each person.

As taught in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2267, civil authorities should limit themselves to non-lethal means to defend and protect people's safety from an aggressor, "as these are more in keeping with the concrete conditions of the common good and more in conformity with the dignity of the human person."

The Permanent Council calls on you and the Government of Canada to reconsider your present stance and to return to the earlier policy of strenuously intervening with other governments when Canadians face a sentence of execution.

For your background information, the Permanent Council, composed of twelve Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops from across Canada, oversees the policies and planning established by the 85 Roman and Eastern Catholic Bishops who form the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.

We respectfully ask you, Mr. Prime Minister, to modify this latest policy change. Capital punishment is a serious undermining of human dignity and of basic respect for human life.

Sincerely,

Most Reverend V. James Weisgerber
Archbishop of Winnipeg
President
Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

CC: The Hon. Robert Douglas Nicholson, P.C., Q.C., M.P.,
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada