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Texas Bishops Respond to Amnesty International

We, the Bishops of Texas, are instructing all parish and diocesan staff and other Catholic organizations to no longer support financially or through publicity, or participate in joint projects or events sponsored by the organization known as Amnesty International. This instruction is based on Amnesty International's decision to limit its human rights agenda by promoting abortion as a way to curb violence against women, especially women in developing countries. In promoting abortion, Amnesty International divides its own members, many of whom are Catholics, and others who defend the rights of unborn children and jeopardizes its support by people in many nations, cultures and religions who share a consistent commitment to all human rights. Our assessment is that Amnesty International is now violating its original mission to protect human rights worldwide and has lost its moral credibility.

While no human rights organization should turn away from the suffering that women face daily in the form of sexual violence, it should not prioritize a mother's life above that of her unborn child. It is better to advocate advancing her educational and economic standing in society and resist all forms of violence and stigmatization against her and her child. Abortion is an act of violence against both the child and its mother. Any organization truly committed to women's rights must put itself in solidarity with women and their unborn children.

Discontinuing participation with Amnesty International does not mean the Catholic Church in Texas will cease to protect human life and promote human dignity in all circumstances. We will continue to oppose the use of the death penalty, unjust incarceration and the crushing effects of dehumanizing poverty in our state. We will continue to stand with refugees, migrants, and other oppressed peoples. But, we will seek to do so in authentic ways, working most closely with organizations who do not oppose the fundamental right to life from conception until natural death.

Cardinal Renato Martino, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, stated that individuals and Catholic organizations must withdraw their support for Amnesty International if it continues with this new policy, because, in deciding to promote abortion rights, Amnesty International has betrayed its mission. This statement has been supported by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. We, therefore, call upon Amnesty International to act in accord with its noblest principles, reconsider its error, and reverse its policy on abortion. Until then, parishes, diocesan staffs, and other Catholic organizations should no longer work with Amnesty International. We also encourage the lay faithful to examine their consciences and prayerfully consider their personal involvement with Amnesty International.

For more information, visit www.TXcatholic.org.