



# HELEN PREJEAN

---

Helen Prejean is a Roman Catholic sister, a member of the Congregation of St. Joseph based in New Orleans, and a leading American advocate for the abolition of the death penalty. She founded the groups SURVIVE to help families of victims of murder and related crimes, and helped establish The Moratorium Campaign to seek an end to executions and conducting education on the death penalty.



## Selected Quotations

- "There are some human rights that are so deep that we can't negotiate them away. I mean people do heinous, terrible things. But there are basic human rights I believe that every human being has... And it's the right not to be tortured and not to be killed."
- "I saw the suffering and I let myself feel it... I saw the injustice and was compelled to do something about it. I changed from being a nun who only prayed for the suffering world to a woman with my sleeves rolled up, living my prayer."
- "It would take me a long time to understand how systems inflict pain and hardship in people's lives and to learn that being kind in an unjust system is not enough."
- "I stand morally opposed to killing: war, executions, killing of the old and demented, the killing of children, unborn and born... I believe that all of life is sacred and must be protected, especially in the vulnerable stages at the beginning of life and its end."



## Online Materials:

- [A Life Against Death: The Work of Sister Helen Prejean \(2017\)](#)
- ["The death penalty is about us": Sister Helen Prejean on humanizing death row prisoners \(2019\)](#)
- [Sister Helen Prejean: The Face of Love Podcast \(2019\)](#)

## Further reading

- Dead ManWalking (1993)
- The Death of Innocents (2004)
- River of Fire: My Spiritual Journey (2019)