



## Statement on execution of Timothy McVeigh

*Archbishop Chaput's statement on the June 11, 2001, execution of Timothy McVeigh.*

June 11, 2001

What we choose, becomes who we are.

Our choices and our actions matter — because they create the kind of future our families and our nation will inhabit.

The penalty phase against Timothy McVeigh is now over. The penalty phase for the rest of us still continues, because in executing Mr. McVeigh we've answered violence with violence and compromised our own human dignity.

As a people, we can never allow ourselves the luxury of forgetting the injustice done to victims of murder and terrorism. We have the duty to bring the guilty to full accounting.

But executing Mr. McVeigh did not honor the dead. It did not ennoble the living. Only a reverence for the sanctity of life can do that.

It did not release the relatives of the victims from their sorrow. Only forgiveness can do that.

Capital punishment can never, by its nature, strike at murder's root. Only love can do that.

Jesus showed again and again by His words and in His actions, that the road to lasting justice passes only through mercy. Killing is a seed that bears fruit in more killing. Justice cannot be served by more violence.

Government has the obligation to embody the highest ideals of a people. As a government and as a free people, we're better than the execution we carried out today. And we're better than the dozens of executions *we plan* to carry out in the months ahead.

The same needle that kills the condemned murderer poisons us with the habit of violence. May God grant us the conversion to see that — for our own sake, and for the sake of our children.

*+ Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.  
Archbishop of Denver*