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Pubblichiamo di seguito la trascrizione del testo del Videomessaggio che, il Santo Padre Leone XIV, ha inviato ai partecipanti alla Celebrazione del 15° Anniversario dell'Abolizione della Pena di Morte nello stato dell'Illinois che si svolge presso la DePaul University di Chicago:

Videomessaggio del Santo Padre

Dear friends,

I am pleased to greet all of you who are gathered at DePaul University to mark the fifteenth anniversary of the decision to abolish the death penalty in the State of Illinois.

The Catholic Church has consistently taught that each human life, from the moment of conception until natural death, is sacred and deserves to be protected. Indeed, the right to life is the very foundation of every other human right. For this reason, only when a society safeguards the sanctity of human life will it flourish and prosper (cf. *Address to Members of the Diplomatic Corps Accredited to the Holy See*, 9 January 2026).

In this regard, we affirm that the dignity of the person is not lost even after very serious crimes are committed. Furthermore, effective systems of detention can be and have been developed that protect citizens while at the same time do not completely deprive those who are guilty of the possibility of redemption (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2267). This is why Pope Francis and my recent predecessors repeatedly insisted that the

common good can be safeguarded and the requirements of justice can be met without recourse to capital punishment. Consequently, the Church teaches that “the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person” (ibid.).

I therefore join you in celebrating the decision made by the Governor of Illinois in 2011, and I likewise offer my support to those who advocate for the abolition of the death penalty in the United States of America and around the world. I pray that your efforts will lead to a greater acknowledgement of the dignity of every person, and will inspire others to work for the same just cause.

With these sentiments, I cordially invoke upon all of you the divine blessings of wisdom, joy and peace.

Thank you.

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