

## Persuasive Essay

### Against the Death Penalty

Justice is not enough; Charity is required. Justice demands that we give others their due and that we respect their right to dignity. That is the alpha and omega of well-being. Even if cold reality brings out, in bold relief, the wages of sin in others, we try and give excuses for their failings. Even if daily we see evidence of evil in others, we never lose hope for them. Even if we are already confronted by the bad intentions of others, we still refrain from judging rashly. We remain patient. We aim to build others up. In fact, charity compels us to build people up and to encourage them to move up to a much higher pedestal. With death penalty, there is no charity; there is no building of others up. Man is so special, that no one can decree to take one's life whatsoever. Each one has his rights, and the most fundamental of all is the right to live. No one has the right to take away that right except for the One who gives the life. The first step to the understanding of human rights is to know what man is. Then we will know what he is for, what is good for him, and therefore what will make him better. This is true for the babe in the mother's womb, for the adult who is mulling over the termination of unwanted incipient lives and for the person who is in the death row. Man is not simply a chunk of electrons nor a machine. He is not a mere vegetable or animal, and neither is he an angel. If therefore he is treated as a being of such natures, then – like any material wrongly handled – he gets destroyed. Man shares with all cosmic matter or energy all the laws of mechanics, whether Newtonian or quantum, and like plants and animals he has life – characterized by growth and reproduction. But there is much more to man than the supreme qualities of the animal kingdom. There are higher powers manifestly proper to man alone. By human rationality – intellect and will, the human person is distinguished from the other creatures in the material universe. The direct

object of human intelligence is reality, upon attaining which the human person is said to know the truth. His free will – whose end is to attain the good – can be fulfilled only in attaining the infinite good. What is the good of man? The good of a thing lies in its fulfilling the end or purpose for which it was made. The good of man must be, as Aristotle noted, that which satisfies his highest faculties or powers, namely his intellect and will.

Ethics, the science of human happiness points to us that what leads to unhappiness is ethically wrong. Therefore, it is ethically wrong to believe in “death penalty” as good. What about the society that adheres to death penalty? The State is understood here as the duly recognized authority of a society. Authority is necessary in society, not just because man is prone to evil, but because of the natural principle of the division of labor. Each person relies on the work of others, and the division of labor that ensues requires coordination, namely not only to repress evil but to positively promote common good, just as a conductor is required to harmonize