

## **U.S.-Sponsored Torture: A Call for a Commission of Inquiry**

WHEREAS one of our core principles as the Provincial Council of the Clerics of St. Viator of the Province of Chicago is our belief in the inherent worth and dignity of all persons; and

WHEREAS torture violates the basic dignity of the human person, degrades everyone involved – from policy-makers to perpetrators to victims – and contradicts our nation’s most cherished values; and

WHEREAS torture is inherently wrong and immoral, because it is designed to break the human soul and the human body; and

WHEREAS reliable evidence available to the public has shown that the United States engaged in torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment in response to the terrorist acts of September 11, 2001, including a report produced by the International Committee of the Red Cross and made known to the public in February of 2009 that concluded: “[T]he ill-treatment to which [detainees] were subjected while held in the CIA[Central Intelligence Agency of the United States] program, either singly or in combination, constituted torture”; and

WHEREAS the full story on the scope, breadth and depth of U.S. sponsored torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment has yet to be fully revealed; and

WHEREAS public awareness, acknowledgment, and understanding of what the United States has done with respect to the use of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment are necessary in order to make sure that our nation never again engages in this conduct;

**THEREFORE**, be it resolved that the Provincial Council of the Clerics of St. Viator of the Province of Chicago endorses the following statement **U.S.-Sponsored Torture Now: A Call for a Commission of Inquiry**.

The United States must never again engage in torture. Torture is immoral, illegal and counterproductive. It causes profound and lasting harm, especially to its victims but also to its perpetrators. It contradicts our nation’s deepest values and corrupts the moral fabric of our society.

We call for an impartial, nonpartisan, and independent Commission of Inquiry. Its purpose should be to gather all the facts and make recommendations. It should ascertain the extent to which our interrogation practices have constituted torture and “cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.” Understanding the causes, nature and scope of U.S.-sponsored torture is essential for preventing it in the future and eliminating it from our system without loopholes. U.S. law will determine the extent of any criminal culpability.

As people of faith, we know that brokenness can be healed – both in individual lives and in the life of the nation. All religions believe that redemption is possible. Learning the truth can set us on a path toward healing and renewal.

The United States must never again allow itself to be driven by blinding fears and bitter resentments in responding to national tragedy. The use of torture only serves to undermine our security in a dangerous world.

Nothing less than the soul of our nation is at stake in confronting U.S.-sponsored torture and completely renouncing its use. Let the U.S. reaffirm its values by establishing a Commission of Inquiry.