

DEAD MAN WALKING *and* THE DEATH OF INNOCENTS

By Sister Helen Prejean

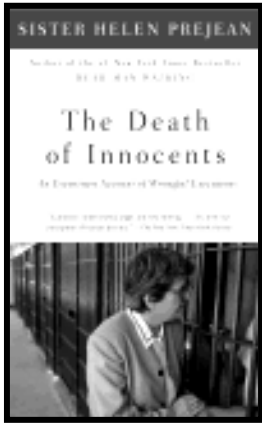


In 1982 Sister Helen Prejean became the spiritual advisor to Patrick Sonnier, for the murder of two teenagers, who was sentenced to die in the electric chair of Louisiana’s State Prison. In the months before Sonnier’s death, the Roman Catholic nun came to know a man who was as terrified as he had once been terrifying. At the same time, she came to know the families of the victims and also the men whose job it was to execute him – men who often harboured doubts about the rightness of what they were doing.

Out of that dreadful intimacy comes a profoundly moving spiritual journey through our system of capital punishment. Confronting both the plight of the condemned and the rage of the bereaved, the needs of a crime-ridden society and the Christian imperative of love, **DEAD MAN WALKING** is a unprecedented look at the human consequences of the death penalty, a book that is both enlightening and devastating.

In **THE DEATH OF INNOCENTS**, Sr. Helen writes about two of the six men she has accompanied to execution since she began her work in 1982. Sr. Helen believes that these two men, Dobie Williams and Joseph O’Dell, were innocent, victims of a system in which race, prosecutorial ambition, poverty, election cycles and publicity play too great a role in determining who dies and who lives.

To date, 122 wrongfully convicted persons have been freed from death row. Sr. Helen implores readers to look closely at a deeply flawed system and to reflect on what is perhaps the core moral issue of the death penalty debate: Honorable people disagree about the justice of executing the guilty, but can anyone argue about the injustice of executing the innocent?



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