

“People of faith believe in the human capacity to reform. The foundational theme of Catholic Social Teaching is ‘the life and dignity of the human person’. Due to the fact that we are all made in the image and likeness of God, every human person is infinitely precious, Society has the right to enforce rules and keep communities safe. However, our response to those who break the law should focus on rehabilitation. Those who commit such transgressions may be flawed but remain full of potential as well. To deny that is to deny God’s plan for creation and to live in a world that is unimaginably bleak.”

-The Most Rev. Gregory M. Aymond, Archbishop of New Orleans

“Any situation in which ‘A’ (the state) objectively exploits ‘B’ (it’s prisoners) or hinders his or her pursuit of self-affirmation as a responsible person is one of oppression. Such a situation in itself constitutes violence, even when sweetened by false generosity, because it interferes with the individual’s ontological and historical vocation to be more fully human. With the establishment of a relationship of oppression, violence has already begun. Violence is initiated by those who oppress, who exploit, who fail, to recognize others as persons....”

-Paulo Freire,  
Pedagogy of the Oppressed

Louisiana Freedom-Fighters at Angola Prison Resistance Against Neo-Slavery and Organizing for the Protection of the Rights of Mankind

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### As A Movement for Human Rights and Human Dignity

“The great end and purpose of our being here at all, is that we shall grow a soul, that we shall build a character, that we shall fashion, under God, the manhood and womanhood that shall outlast all influences of time.”

The right to create, to innovate, to seek improvement, to find a better way to live are rights that are God-given and inalienable. Just because a human being made a poor choice, wrong decision, or has committed some offense against society does not mean one forfeits his or her right to human redemption.

We contend that it is counter-productive to human development and to rehabilitative efforts to continue to label persons according to past misdeeds 10-20 years later and that the science and contemporary standards of decency require some up-to-date process to measure a prisoner’s rehabilitation or lack thereof.

That we are so eager to repair broken appliances, invest in science to find cures to disease and stem-cell research to mend human defects is evidence of a society committed to healing, reviving, redeeming, and reclaiming mankind.

Therefore, we dissent against the injustice of a rule of law and power that seeks to criminalize our person and communities and cage us for exploitation, profits, subjugation, and control.

### As A Movement for Unity and Social Change

“The major antidote to powerlessness is collective action. The myth of powerlessness survives only as long as people don’t organize to take power.”

We can see the call for social change and the unity of the people in the chants: “No Justice, No Peace!” “Black Lives Matter!” “Not One Dime!” “All of US or None!” “Say Her Name!” “Class Mates, Not Cell Mates!” “Decarcerate PA!” “Decarcerate New Jersey!” “Free Alabama!” “No Taxation Without Representation!” “No More Protest, Just Revolution!”

As a people power movement, we seek to bring about positive changes and results in our constitutional system. We’re taking action to end mass incarceration, prison slavery, solitary confinement, inhumane prison conditions, the death penalty, life sentences, and all unjust laws and policies that unduly exclude, exploit, oppress, and degrade mankind. Instead of wasting time, prisoners could be atoning, learning what’s inside of them and earning a degree that translates into the rehabilitated, useful, law-abiding citizen. In this way, the prisoner will be prepared to have positive impact on his community and society as a whole under “strategic release”.

### As An Organization

“The only way to win in the long and ongoing history of our struggle against tyranny and oppression is through consistent courage by our comrades and allies and supporters, on the ground activism, and organized pressure.

We are made up of a constitution of documents setting forth a Preamble, Position Statement, Our Purpose, Our Aims, Our Motto, Vision and Mission Statements, accounts for What We Want and What We Believe, et al. To review, please visit [www.decarceratelouisiana.com](http://www.decarceratelouisiana.com)

We are not incorporated, but aspire to independence of action and self-determination. We seek outside help from our families, friends, comrades, and allies to support us in organizing to create helping networks, partnerships, and coalitions to battle for an equitable and just legal system that works for all of us, not just some of us.