

# Dead Man Walking discussion continued.

## Time of the trial

After being present in the trials and getting to know [Elmo Patrick Sonnier](#) better, [Sister Helen Prejean](#) said she felt bad for the parents and families of Bourque and LeBlanc. She empathized with Sonnier and that meant she couldn't face the parents of the deceased because she was afraid that they would be infuriated with her. She thought this mainly because she was Sonnier's adviser.

Unplanned Sister Helen Prejean ran into Bourque's parents and were furious at her, just like she had assumed. But when she ran into LeBlanc's parents they said that they were surprised that she didn't visit them. They told her that they felt under pressure since the Sonnier was on death row. That was when it hit her. Forgiveness. LeBlanc's family taught her that *Forgiveness means the saving of your own life*. The love in us and integrity inside us can win over the disgust and hatred inside us.



(Restraint chair)

with viewing  
windows)

As Sister Helen Prejean talked to LeBlanc's family she learned that they need to talk. She brought up the question, *why do people stay away when bad things happen?* It's because they don't know how to comfort those effected, how to talk to them without making it difficult.

**When discussing the making of the film [Dead Man Walking](#) I found it interesting that during the movie they were going through the protocol of death row with detail.**

To make it clear how Sister Helen Prejean saw Sonnier she said that when she talked to Pat he was healthy, remorseful, and he was coherent. She did not see why they must kill him. Take his life away. Who has the right to do that? She said Pat was not like people who are dying in the hospital. The people who you could see them slipping away.

**When Sister Helen Prejean used this comparison I was holding my breath. I took a few minutes to view things through her eyes.**

**The hour of execution.**

Sonnier said he didn't want Sister Helen Prejean to watch him be electrocuted. She said to Sonnier that he had to look her in the eyes before he was killed. She said this so that he could feel like he still had dignity.

**Something I found very interesting was when I heard that the**

**Guard said that some of these people on death row are little boys in grown men's bodies.**

On April 5, 1984 Sister Helen Prejeans mission began. She spends her time educating citizens about the death penalty and also by advising more death row prisoners.



Durango Community Members at Sister Helen Prejeans book discussion