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Statement of Kansas City Bishops on *Bodies Revealed* Exhibit
February 27, 2008

The Most Reverend Joseph F. Naumann, Archbishop of Kansas City in Kansas, and Most Reverend Robert W. Finn, Bishop of Kansas City ~ St. Joseph have issued the following statement in response to 'Bodies Revealed,' soon coming to Union Station in Kansas City, Missouri.

Catholic moral teaching regards the human person as a unity of soul and body, spirit and matter -- beings capable of freedom and love in communion with other persons and with God. As such, the body is more than just a vessel for the soul. The Church's concern for human dignity extends to the body even after the soul is no longer present.

The bodies of the dead deserve respect and charity, preserving the God-given dignity of the human person. In lieu of immediate burial, the Church does allow for – and in some cases commends - the conscientious free choice of persons to “donate” their bodies for legitimate scientific research and educational purposes. In these instances, the deceased body and its parts deserve respectful interment.

Concerning the “Bodies” exhibit, one of our brother bishops recently wrote, “The public exhibition of plasticized bodies, unclaimed, unidentified, and displayed without reverence, is unseemly and inappropriate. Whatever the merits of ‘Bodies’ as an educational exhibit, and however well-intentioned the exhibit’s creators might be, we believe that the use of human bodies in this way fails to respect the persons involved.”

We regard the “Bodies” exhibit as an unfortunate exploitation of that which is “real” to teach something that could be accomplished by use of models. As such it represents a kind of “human taxidermy” that degrades the actual people who, through their bodies, once lived, loved, prayed, and died.

For these reasons, we do not believe that this exhibit is an appropriate destination for field trips by our Catholic schools.