

## **DEAD MAN WALKING: Homework Questions**

**Due SES #16: Answer Ques. 5, 6, 7 and one other question.**

1. What are the various symbolic meanings of the title?
2. What does Sister Helen Prejean (Susan Sarandon) symbolize? What's her motive in counseling Matthew Poncelet (Sean Penn)? How does she change over the course of the film?
3. What is your initial reaction to Matthew Poncelet?  
--How do you see him change over the course of the film?
4. How and when are the crimes portrayed? What is the effect on the viewer?
5. Write about one scene in which DEAD MAN WALKING seems to be taking a position for capital punishment. Describe the scene—what elements of the scene (visuals, dialogue, etc.) lead you to see this scene as pro-capital punishment?
6. Write about one scene in which the film seems to be adopting a stance that is anti-capital punishment. Describe the scene—what elements of the scene (visuals, dialogue, etc.) lead you to view this scene as anti-capital punishment?
7. How do you interpret the last scene?
8. What was your point of view on capital punishment before seeing the film? What effect(s) did the film have on you? Does the film have a dominant point of view on the capital punishment debate? If so, what is the film's perspective?

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