

## Poland and the death penalty

John L. Allen Jr. | Aug. 4, 2006 All Things Catholic

The risks of associating the church with any secular political force were underscored this week, with news that the Polish government under President Lech Kaczynski will campaign for a return of the death penalty in the European Union.

Kaczynski said that the EU, which has effectively banned capital punishment, would come to see it was justified for murder.

Kaczynski and his twin, Jaroslaw, the Polish prime minister, came to power last year promising a tough stance against corruption and crime; indeed, the name of their party is "Law and Justice." The Kaczynski twins also, however, promised to reawaken the Catholic roots of Poland, and have been embraced by important sectors of the Polish church.

It will be interesting to see if Benedict and the Polish hierarchy attempt to spend some of this political capital to sway Kaczynski's position on the death penalty -- and if so, what effect it might have.

*The e-mail address for John L. Allen Jr. is [jallen@ncronline.org](mailto:jallen@ncronline.org)[1]*

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[1] <mailto:jallen@natcath.org>