“Memories of a Dead Man Walking”
Sister Helen Prejean

Before you read, answer the following question:
1. Are there any circumstances under which a convicted murder ought or ought not to be executed? Explain your answer.

As you read the article, answer the following questions:
2. What is Sister Prejean’s purpose for writing this essay?
3. In paragraph three, Sister Prejean says, “There’s a lot of ‘biblical quarterbacking’ in death penalty debates, with people tossing in quotes from the Bible to back up what they’ve already decided on, people wanting to practice vengeance and have God agree with them.” What does she mean?
4. How does Sister Prejean establish ethos throughout her essay?
5. Do you think the argument in paragraph ten (regarding different situations with parents of murdered children and socio-economic status) is based on ethos, pathos, or logos? Explain your answer.
6. In paragraph eleven (starting with “Patrick tried to protect me…”), Sister Prejean is using which rhetorical device? Provide a quote from the paragraph to support your answer.
7. How would you characterize Sister Prejean’s tone in the last three paragraphs of this essay? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
8. Is your reaction to Sister Prejean’s argument influenced by her being a nun? Why or why not?
9. Overall, how effective is Sister Prejean’s argument? Which parts are most (or least) convincing?

After you read, answer the following question:
10. To what extent do you think that personal experience might influence people’s attitude toward the death penalty? Answer this question completely by structuring an argument using ethos/pathos/logos.