



CATHOLIC BISHOPS: NEITHER RETRIBUTION NOR DETERRENCE JUSTIFY DEATH PENALTY

Tallahassee --- The Catholic Bishops of Florida appeal to Governor Bush to spare the life of Rigoberto Sanchez-Velasco who is scheduled to die October 2, 2002. We are troubled that he has volunteered for this execution. We are troubled that the state will grant his wish, especially at this time of increasing confusion about our death penalty law, with growing numbers calling for a moratorium.

We express our genuine sympathy for the victims of his crimes, and their loved ones. We do not, though, believe his state sanctioned killing will honor them or lessen the pain. Instead, this execution will affect us all, diminishing the value we place on human life, even those guilty of serious evil. Capital punishment by the state cuts short the opportunity for conversion and repentance.

Neither retribution nor deterrence can justify the death penalty. Society needs to be protected from criminals, but we need not go to the extent of executing them. We must seek justice without vengeance, without further killing. Please stay this sentence, Governor Bush.

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Bishop Norbert M. Dorsey, CP
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