



FLORIDA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE
Advocating Life, Dignity and the Common Good since 1969

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Bishops say: Don't kill to show killing is wrong

Tallahassee - We, the Bishops of Florida, are dismayed by the scheduling of a second execution within a thirty day period and ask Governor Crist to grant a stay of the impending execution of David Eugene Johnston on March 9, 2010. In pursuing justice for victims of violent crimes, the state must not be blinded by politics or the desire for revenge that would violate human dignity and the sacredness of all life.

The opposition of the Catholic Church to the use of the death penalty should not be construed as a lack of compassion for victims of crime. Our hearts go out to the family and loved ones of the victim, Mary Hammond. True healing takes place when forgiveness is practiced as Jesus did. The increasing recognition that the dignity of human life should not be denied applies even to those who have done great evil.

Jesus calls us to seek no revenge and love our enemies. In Matthew 5:43-45, Scripture says, "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your friends, hate your enemies.' But I now tell you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may become children of your Father in heaven. For he makes his sun to shine on bad and good people alike, and gives rain to those who do good and to those who do evil."

Governor Crist, we ask you to reconsider your decision to execute David Eugene Johnston and show him mercy by stopping this execution. Society can be safeguarded by commuting the sentence to life in prison without possibility of parole, and we urge you to exercise this option for Mr. Johnston.

Archbishop John C. Favalora
Archdiocese of Miami

Bishop Victor Galeone
Diocese of St. Augustine

Bishop Robert N. Lynch
Diocese of St. Petersburg

Bishop Thomas G. Wenski
Diocese of Orlando

Bishop John H. Ricard, SSJ
Diocese of Pensacola/Tallahassee

Bishop Gerald M. Barbarito
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Archdiocese of Miami

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Archdiocese of Miami

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