



Diocese of Austin

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Bishop pleads for Rodney Reed’s life

AUSTIN, Texas – *Bishop Joe S. Vásquez, of the Diocese of Austin, issued the following statement on Nov. 5, 2019:*

“Some months back, I learned that legitimate and serious doubts have been raised regarding the conviction of Mr. Rodney Reed who is scheduled to be executed in Texas on Nov. 20, 2019. Through the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops, my brother bishops and I asked the state of Texas to grant a stay of execution for Mr. Reed. There are enough doubts in this case that justice dictates a careful review of the new witness statements and other evidence recently brought forward. Additionally, there are attorneys familiar with Mr. Reed’s case reporting they have sincere doubts the conviction can withstand scrutiny. Yesterday, in an unusual step, a bipartisan group of legislators wrote a letter urging the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles to postpone execution until the new evidence is thoroughly vetted. I concur with their assessment that proceeding with an execution without certainty of guilt will erode the public trust in our justice system.

“If the scheduled execution of Mr. Reed proceeds, there is great risk the state of Texas will execute a man who is innocent of this crime while allowing the guilty party to go free. Justice compels the state to further review the full body of evidence in this case. My prayers remain with the family of Stacey Stites and all murder victims’ families. I continue to pray for healing and justice for all who have been touched by this tragedy.”

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The Roman Catholic Diocese of Austin includes 125 parishes, or faith communities, in 25 counties in Central Texas. The diocese stretches over 21,000 square miles.