

## **CATHOLIC BISHOPS: EVERY LIFE HAS DIGNITY**

We, the Bishops of Florida, plead with you, Governor Crist, to stay the execution of Richard Marek scheduled for August 19, 2009. Even those who have done great harm are human beings with dignity, created in the image and likeness of God. Life in prison without possibility of parole satisfies the need for punishment and allows the inmate the opportunity to reflect on their offenses and feel sorrow for the pain they have caused others.

Executions do not make society safer nor act as a deterrent but add to the violence we experience daily in society, numbing us to the truth that every human being has worth. You have the ability to stop the intentional killing of the people on death row by commuting death sentences to life in prison without possibility of parole.

We express our genuine sympathy for the victim, Adella Marie Simmons, and her loved ones. The media attention surrounding executions brings back the pain experienced by victims through the recounting of the crime details. The death of the convicted does not heal the wounds of those grieving the loss of a family member or friend.

Governor, many states are reconsidering their use of the death penalty as the solution to punish those guilty of heinous crimes. We implore you to commute Mr. Marek's sentence to life in prison without possibility of parole and declare a moratorium on executions in Florida.

**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**  
Diocese of Palm Beach

**Bishop Frank J. Dewane**  
Diocese of Venice

**Auxiliary Bishop Felipe J. Estevez**  
Archdiocese of Miami

**Auxiliary Bishop John G. Noonan**  
Archdiocese of Miami

August 17, 2009