



**FLORIDA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS**  
*The nonpartisan public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Florida*

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## **Catholic Bishops: Florida Should Reject State Sanctioned Killing**

October 11, 2012

We the Catholic Bishops of Florida affirm the dignity of every person, both victims and offenders. We reject state sanctioned killing and ask the State of Florida to join the growing number of states who have rejected execution and enacted the option of life in prison without possibility of parole.

After 34 years on death row, John Errol Ferguson, age 64, is scheduled for execution on October 16<sup>th</sup> despite pleas for his life based on mental health issues and a troubled home life including a gun head injury as a youth. May God have mercy on his soul.

We offer our sincere sympathy to the families of the multiple victims who suffered from Mr. Ferguson's actions and pray they have received comfort and healing in their time of need. All people are made in the image and likeness of God, even those who have done great harm. Given the ability of the modern penal system to protect society and growing moral aversion to the death penalty, justice and punishment can be achieved by incarcerating offenders for life.

As a sign of solidarity with all those around the state in prayer during the time of the execution, Most Reverend Felipe Estévez, Bishop of St. Augustine, will preside at a one hour prayer vigil on October 16<sup>th</sup>, 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the Cathedral-Basilica of St. Augustine, 38 Cathedral Place, St. Augustine, Florida.

**Most Reverend Thomas G. Wenski**  
Archdiocese of Miami

**Most Reverend Gerald M. Barbarito**  
Diocese of Palm Beach

**Most Reverend Robert N. Lynch**  
Diocese of St. Petersburg

**Most Reverend Frank J. Dewane**  
Diocese of Venice

**Most Reverend John G. Noonan**  
Diocese of Orlando

**Most Reverend Felipe J. Estévez**  
Diocese of St. Augustine

**Most Reverend Gregory L. Parkes**  
Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee