

STATEMENT ON A PLEA FOR MERCY FOR DAN PATRICK HAUSER

August 17, 2000

The Bishops of Florida appeal to Governor Jeb Bush for clemency and a stay of the death sentence of Dan Patrick Hauser, scheduled to die by lethal injection at 6:00 p.m. on 22 August 2000. In making this plea, we do not forget Melanie Rodrigues, whose brutal, terrible death brings us to outrage. We grope for ways to help heal the wounds of her family and friends who still grieve. Yet we remain convinced that we give greater honor to her death by rejecting the added violence of this execution, which will neither restore life nor heal pain.

We reiterate our appeal that it is only when society cannot be protected in any other way that the death penalty is justified. Neither retribution nor deterrence justify taking a human life. Executions must be seen for what they are, legitimized killing by the state.

Capital Punishment perpetuates the cycle of violence and feeds an underlying sense of vengeance in our culture. Life in prison without opportunity for parole is available as Florida's alternative, allowing society to protect itself and allowing criminals the chance to reform.

We are a government of, for and by the people. This execution is not in our name. We appeal to Governor Bush for mercy in the case of Dan Patrick Hauser.

Archbishop John C. Favalora
Archdiocese of Miami

Bishop Norbert M. Dorsey, CP
Diocese of Orlando

Bishop John J. Snyder
Diocese of St. Augustine

Bishop Anthony J. O'Connell
Diocese of Palm Beach

Bishop John J. Nevins
Diocese of Venice

Bishop Agustín A. Román
Archdiocese of Miami

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

Bishop Gilberto Fernandez
Archdiocese of Miami

Bishop Robert N. Lynch
Diocese of St. Petersburg

Bishop Thomas G. Wenski
Archdiocese of Miami