



## FLORIDA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

*Advocating Life, Dignity and the Common Good Since 1969*

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### **Florida Bishops Appeal to Governor Scott to Stay Execution of Paul Howell February 22, 2013**

The Catholic Bishops of Florida ask Governor Scott to stay the execution of Paul Howell convicted for the 1992 murder of Florida State Trooper James Fulford. Mr. Howell is scheduled to be executed at Florida State Prison in Starke on Tuesday, February 26.

We, the Bishops of Florida, hold that all human life has dignity and is sacred, created in God's image, even those who have done great harm. Violence begets violence and coarsens the culture so that life is no longer valued as a gift from God. Today, we are able to protect society and also give criminals a chance to reform and repent as they are punished.

It is of great concern that the jury that recommended Mr. Howell's death sentence did not have the benefit of a full review of mental health issues and his family history. There are questions as to the adequacy of his defense, raised by missing a deadline that would have allowed federal review of his case. These points should weigh on anyone charged with the task of either carrying out or foregoing an execution.

We pray for Trooper Fulford and for all those traumatized by his death, especially his family, friends and colleagues that they will know consolation and peace. We also pray for Governor Scott that he might see fit to stay this execution. May all residents of our state – but especially those affected by the tragic circumstances of Trooper Fulford's death – know deeper reconciliation and respect for all human life from conception to natural death.

As a sign of solidarity with those around the state in prayer prior to the execution, the bishops have called for special prayer vigils to be held on Monday, February 25, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. local time at the following locations in the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee: Co-Cathedral of St. Thomas More in Tallahassee, Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Pensacola, St. Mary Parish in Fort Walton Beach, St. John the Evangelist Parish in Panama City, and St. Margaret of Scotland Parish in DeFuniak Springs.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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