



STATEMENT ON A PLEA FOR MERCY FOR THOMAS PROVENZANO

June 17, 2000

The Catholic Bishops of the State of Florida again appeal to Governor Jeb Bush for a stay of execution for Thomas Provenzano scheduled to die in the electric chair on June 17, 2000. The uncertainty of Provenzano's mental state adds to the urgency of this appeal.

The need for support and assistance to the surviving victims of violent crimes remains our steadfast concern. Violent crime exists in our society, and the state has the right and duty to protect its citizens and to enforce the law and punish criminals. But we are today able to protect society and can do so without denying criminals a chance to reform. We diminish ourselves as a people when we take away the dignity of human life, even from one who has committed serious evil.

Since 1994, Florida has had an alternative to capital punishment, that of life imprisonment with no chance of parole. We urge a consensus toward this alternative, and a show of respect for all life, even for those who have not shown respect for others.

Violence can only breed more violence. The commandment "thou shall not kill," will not be taught by killing people who have killed other people. We must put an end to the killing, especially this particular killing, over which we have control.

We appeal to the Governor, the Cabinet and the courts for mercy and a stay of this sentence.

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