

STATEMENT ON A PLEA FOR MERCY FOR EDWARD CASTRO

December 5, 2000

The Bishops of Florida appeal to Governor Jeb Bush for mercy in the case of Edward Castro, who is scheduled to die by lethal injection at 6:00 p.m. on December 7, 2000. We must never forget Austin C. Scott, nor his family and friends, whose brutal death has caused unimaginable pain and agony. We are moved, though, to reject the added violence this execution will bring on our society, knowing it will neither restore life, nor take away the pain caused by Mr. Scott's death.

Executions are legitimized killing by the state and they perpetuate a cycle of violence, feeding an underlying sense of vengeance in our culture. Florida has an alternative to executions through life in prison with no possibility of parole. More killing is not a solution. "I set before you life and death . . . choose life." (Cf. Deuteronomy 30:19)

It is acknowledged by almost all that capital cases in our judicial system have proven to be inconsistent, arbitrary and too often in error. Florida's alarmingly high reversal rate leads us to join with others in calling for a moratorium on executions. But here and now, we appeal to Governor Jeb Bush for clemency and a stay of death sentence for Edward Castro.

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