



Florida Catholic Conference: Spare Paul Hill

Tallahassee -- We appeal to Governor Bush to commute the death sentence of Paul Hill, scheduled for execution on September 3, 2003, to life in prison without possibility of parole. His brutal murders of Dr. John Britton and Lt. Col. James Barrett outside of an abortion clinic were an unjustifiable attack on human life and we unequivocally condemn and renounce his actions. Abortion kills unborn children, hurts women and is a terrible wrong; taking lives as Paul Hill did is no less a terrible wrong.

Paul Hill's actions have not helped to increase respect for life of the unborn. His execution will further desensitize society's understanding of the sacredness of all human life. The dignity of human life can never be taken away, even in the case of someone who has done great evil.

Regardless of Paul Hill's actions, we must learn to respect every human life, including the lives of those who fail to show that respect for others. His execution will only perpetuate a cycle of violence and further promote a sense of vengeance in our society. The sacredness of human life and the dignity of the human person are not privileges we earn by good deeds, nor are they forfeited by whatever crimes one commits.

The state has a right and responsibility to protect society and punish criminals. When society can be kept safe from criminals, we should not execute them. Florida's alternative of life in prison without parole is a severe punishment, allows the possibility of conversion for the sinner, and gives us the opportunity to forgive their wrong doings.

Please stay this execution.