

FLORIDA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

201 WEST PARK AVENUE
TALLAHASSEE, FL 32301-7715

PHONE (850) 205-6820
FAX (850) 205-6849
WWW.FLACCB.ORG

MICHAEL B. SHEEDY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



August 21, 2017

The Honorable Rick Scott
Governor of Florida
Plaza Level 05, The Capitol
400 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0001

Re: Request to Commute Death Sentence to Life without Parole for Mark Asay

Dear Governor Scott:

The Florida Conference of Catholic Bishops appeals to you to commute Mark Asay's death sentence to a life sentence without the possibility of parole.

Florida has not carried out the execution of an individual for eighteen months. The inconsistent and arbitrary application of the death penalty has only become more apparent since Florida's most recent execution in January 2016. Defendants whose death sentences were finalized after June 2002 have been considered eligible for resentencing hearings. Yet, those, like Mr. Asay, sentenced prior to that date - but under the same system ruled unconstitutional - have been denied relief.

Mr. Asay, who is scheduled to be executed August 24, has been convicted of committing two heinous murders. The victims, Robert Lee Booker and Robert McDowell, and their families have been terribly wronged. Indeed, Mr. Asay's violent acts call out for justice and should be condemned. However, life without parole is an alternative and severe sentence. We hold that if non-lethal means are available to keep society safe from an aggressor, then authority must limit itself to such means. This is the case in Florida, and it is within your authority to commute Mr. Asay's sentence.

We applaud your leadership as a pro-life governor as it relates to protecting the unborn and promoting human dignity. Each human life has a God-given dignity that is neither earned nor lost through our actions, even those that have caused great harm. We seek a state that is unequivocally and consistently pro-life, protecting human life in all stages and in all circumstances.

We pray for all involved in this tragic situation: you, as the final authority in the state over Mr. Asay's life or death; the condemned and his conversion guided by his spiritual advisors; and the victims and their loved ones.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael B. Sheedy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'S' at the end.

Michael B. Sheedy

cc: (Arch)Bishops of Florida