

FLORIDA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

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MICHAEL B. SHEEDY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



September 28, 2017

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

**Re: *Concerns about pending execution of Michael Lambrix;
Request to commute his death sentence to life without parole***

Dear Governor Scott:

As the scheduled execution of Michael Lambrix approaches, we write to express our continued opposition to the use of the death penalty and to ask you to commute his sentence to life without parole. One of our concerns with the death penalty is the arbitrariness with which it is applied.

Supporters of the death penalty generally presume that this most extreme of sentences is reserved for the "worst of the worst," when in fact it is applied in a very arbitrary manner. Note that Mr. Lambrix indicates he was offered a plea deal, which, had he accepted it, would have allowed him to return to society and his family by now. Instead, he faces execution.

Additionally, his first trial resulted in a hung jury. With 10-2 and 8-4 jury recommendations for death, Mr. Lambrix was also sentenced under the same unconstitutional scheme that did not require jury unanimity in recommending death, which was invalidated in *Hurst v. Florida*. Had his sentence been finalized after June 2002, he would be eligible for resentencing and possible commutation to a life sentence without parole.

Notwithstanding the concerns particular to this case, we appeal to you to commute Mr. Lambrix's death sentence to a life sentence without the possibility of parole because it shows deeper respect for the inherent dignity of the human person. This will also protect society from further acts of aggression and is a severe punishment. It will also avoid the moral incoherence that aims to teach that killing is wrong by killing.

We join you and many others in grieving the deaths of Clarence Moore and Aleisha Bryant. We acknowledge their loved ones' pain, and we pray they have received comfort and healing. However, taking Mr. Lambrix's life will not restore their lives. Rather, state-sanctioned killing will contribute to a growing disrespect for the sacredness of all human life and feed an underlying sense of vengeance in our culture.

As with every recent execution, Floridians will gather in solidarity around the state to pray for God's mercy for Mr. Moore and Ms. Bryant, and for peace and healing for their families. We will pray for forgiveness and God's mercy for the condemned, and for you, as you confront the decision to proceed with the execution.

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael B. Sheedy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael B. Sheedy

cc: (Arch)Bishops of Florida