



FLORIDA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

201 W. Park Avenue
Tallahassee, FL 32301
www.flaccb.org

Michele M. Taylor

Associate Director for Communications, (850) 205-6817, mtaylor@flacathconf.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Michael B. Sheedy
Executive Director
(850) 205-6820
msheedy@flacathconf.org

Florida Bishops' Conference urges Governor Scott to commute sentence of Robert Hendrix; Community prays for the condemned, his victims, and an end to the use of the death penalty

Tallahassee (April 16, 2014) – The Florida Catholic Conference asks Governor Rick Scott to commute the sentence of Robert Hendrix to life in prison without the possibility of parole. Mr. Hendrix is scheduled to be executed at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 23, 2014 for the 1990 murders of Elmer Scott, Jr. and Michelle Scott.

The Conference recognizes the criminal behavior for which Mr. Hendrix has been found guilty; however, the taking of his life is not necessary. A sentence of life in prison without possibility of parole is a severe and just punishment, which protects society and allows for the prospect of reconciliation and forgiveness.

Pope Francis reminds us of the capacity of people to repent and the need to rely on God's merciful judgment rather than on the human desire for revenge. The Holy Father stated in his 2014 World Day of Peace message, "...human beings can experience conversion; they must never despair of being able to change their lives. I wish this to be a message of hope and confidence for all, even for those who have committed brutal crimes, for God does not wish the death of the sinner, but that he converts and lives" (cf. *Ezekiel 18:23*).

Catholic faithful and members of the community are invited to gather in solidarity at the following times and locations to pray for the victims of violent crimes and their families, for persons on death row awaiting execution, and for the end to the use of the death penalty:

Archdiocese of Miami

A prayer vigil will be held following 11:45 a.m. Mass on Wednesday, April 23 at St. Martha Catholic Church, 9401 Biscayne Boulevard, Miami Shores. Contact: Juan Di Prado, (305) 762-1046, jdiprado@theadom.org.

Diocese of St. Augustine

Prayer vigils will be held on Wednesday, April 23 at the following locations:

- In front of the St. Augustine Beach City Hall at the corner of A1A and 16th Street, 5:15 - 6:15 p.m. Contact: Nancy O'Byrne, (904) 461-9216, obyren@bellsouth.net.
- In front of the new Duval County Unified Courthouse, 501 W. Adams Street, Jacksonville, 4:30 - 5:30 p.m. Contact: Jackie Gunning, (904) 449-3328, jacqueline.gunning@bmcjax.com or Sr. Maureen Kelley at (904) 704-0313, mkelleyop@att.net.
- In front of the Flagler County Courthouse, 5:00-6:00 p.m., 1769 E. Moody Blvd, Bunnell. Contact: Jackie Morelewicz, (386) 986-3146, jackiem@cfl.rr.com.
- Across the highway from the Florida State Prison Execution Building, Starke, 5:00 - 6:30 p.m. Drive eight miles west of US 301 on Florida Highway 16 West. Contact: John Linnehan, (904) 504-1004, metanoia.mx@gmail.com.

A carpool will be leaving on Wednesday, April 23 at 4:30 p.m. from the parking lot of St. Augustine Church and Catholic Student Center, 1738 W. University Avenue, Gainesville to attend a prayer service at Florida State Prison. Contact: Michelle Garcia, (352) 372-3533, info@catholicgators.com.

Diocese of St. Petersburg

Spirit FM 90.5 WBVM Tampa will be praying on air Wednesday, April 23, beginning at 5:50 pm. Spirit FM is also available on the internet (www.spiritfm905.com).

A prayer vigil will be held at Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church, 550 U.S. Highway 41 S., Inverness on Wednesday, April 23, at 5:30 p.m. Contact: Sabrina Burton Schultz, Diocese of St. Petersburg, (727) 344-1611, sab@dosp.org.

Diocese of Orlando

A prayer service will be held at St. Paul's Catholic Church, 1330 Sunshine Avenue, Leesburg, FL on Wednesday, April 23 at 6:00 p.m.

A prayer service will be held at St. Patrick Catholic Church, 6803 Old Hwy 441 South, Mt. Dora on Wednesday, April 23 at 3:00 p.m.

A bus will be leaving from the parking lot of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, 201 University Blvd., Daytona Beach on April 23 at 2:30 p.m. for a prayer service outside of the prison in Starke at 6:00 p.m. Contact: Office of Advocacy and Justice, (407) 246-4819, advocacyjustice@orlandodiocese.org.

Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee

A holy hour will take place at Basilica of St. Michael the Archangel, 19 N. Palafox St., Pensacola, on Wednesday, April 23 at 11:00 a.m. (CST). Contact: (850) 438-4985.

A prayer service/holy hour will be held at St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church, 1008 Fortune Avenue, Panama City, on Monday, April 21 at 7:00 p.m. (CST). Contact: (850) 763-1821, stj.office@knology.net.

A prayer service/holy hour will be held at St. Mary Catholic Church, 110 St. Mary Ave SW, Fort Walton Beach, on Tuesday, April 22 at 6:00 p.m. (CST). Contact: (850) 243-3742.

A prayer service to end the use of the death penalty is held at Immaculate Conception parish, 2750 South Byron Butler Parkway, Perry, every Thursday afternoon at 3:00 p.m.

A prayer service will be held at Good Shepherd Catholic Church, 4665 Thomasville Rd, Tallahassee, on Tuesday, April 22 at 6:00 p.m. Contact: (850) 339-7847.

Additional Contact: Deacon Ray Aguado, Office of Advocacy and Justice, Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee, (850) 435-3531, aguador@ptdiocese.org.

Tallahassee Citizens Against the Death Penalty will sponsor an interfaith prayer vigil scheduled for Wednesday, April 23 at 6:00 p.m. in front of the Governor's Mansion in Tallahassee and a service of remembrance in the Capitol Building Plaza Level Rotunda the day after the execution, Thursday, April 24, at noon. Contact: Sheila Meehan, (850) 524-0080.

Pax Christi and TCADP will sponsor Stations of the Cross on Good Friday, April 18 at 12:00 noon on the east steps of the Old Capitol. Contact: Shirley Poore: (850) 893-6838 or shirleypoore@comcast.net.

Diocese of Palm Beach

Catholic Charities Respect Life Office in partnership with the Diocese of Palm Beach and Pax Christi will host a prayer service on Wednesday, April 23 at 5:30 p.m. at the Cathedral of St. Ignatius Loyola, 9999 N. Military Trail, Palm Beach Gardens. The service will be followed by a procession and silent vigil in front of the Cathedral from 5:45 - 6:15 p.m. Contact: Dianne Laubert, (561) 313-2280, dlaubert@diocesepb.org.

Diocese of Venice

A prayer vigil will be held in the Chapel at St. Katharine Drexel Catholic Church, 1922 SW 20th Avenue, Cape Coral on Good Friday, April 18, at 3:00 p.m. Contact: Maria, (239) 540-7096, maria1403@juno.com.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church, 425 South Tamiami Trail, Osprey, will hold a prayer vigil on Wednesday, April 23 at 5:30 p.m. Contact: Parish office (941) 966-0807.

#

The Florida Catholic Conference is an agency of the Catholic Bishops of Florida. The archbishop and bishops of the seven (arch)dioceses in Florida constitute its board of directors.