



November 21, 2014

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Jeffery Patterson, Ph.D.  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Honorable Rick Perry  
Governor of the State of Texas  
P.O. Box 12428  
Austin, TX 78711

Dear Governor Perry,

The Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops most respectfully asks you, as a man of deep Christian values, to stay the execution of Mr. Scott Louis Panetti (#999164), who is currently scheduled to be put to death on December 3, 2014, and to commute his sentence to ensure that he receives appropriate medical treatment for mental illness.

The Church has tremendous sympathy for the family of Mr. Panetti's victims, Mr. Joe Gaitan Alvarado and his wife Mrs. Amanda Carrion Alvarado. In no way do we wish to diminish their suffering and loss. However, as you know, it is the parable of the Good Samaritan where Jesus teaches that a true neighbor is one who shows mercy (Luke 10:37). Showing mercy does not mean neglecting to administer justice or punish people for their crimes. Showing mercy does mean exhibiting compassion toward all of our brothers and sisters, and providing them with an opportunity for atonement and rehabilitation.

Our request for mercy in this case is motivated not only by the Catholic Church's active opposition to the death penalty as a desecration of human life, but also in part by Mr. Panetti's circumstances. Mr. Panetti's lengthy history of mental illness, his delusional behavior while defending himself at trial in 1995, and the multiple diagnoses from mental health professionals confirming his severe mental illness, provide even more reason to stop his execution. While government has an obligation to protect the community from violent offenders, it also bears a responsibility to ensure justice and proper treatment for our brothers and sisters suffering from mental illness. Putting to death anyone whose faculties are so severely debilitated by mental illness as to not comprehend nor be responsible for his actions is not merely unjust, but immoral.

Catholics across the state and nation continue to pray for Mr. Panetti, his victims, and their families. And, because of our conviction that mercy truly does triumph over judgment, we strongly urge you to grant him a stay of execution.

Yours in Christ,

Jeffery R. Patterson, Ph.D.  
Executive Director