

FLORIDA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

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MICHAEL B. SHEEDY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



August 14, 2019
Memorial of St. Maximilian Kolbe

The Honorable Ron DeSantis
Governor of Florida
The Capitol
400 S. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Re: Please stay execution of Gary Ray Bowles

Dear Governor DeSantis:

As we approach the date of Gary Ray Bowles' scheduled execution, we urge you to grant a stay.

Mr. Bowles was sentenced to death after pleading guilty to the 1994 murder of Walter Hinton in Duval County, Florida. He also confessed to five other murders and is serving life sentences for two of those. His violent actions tragically ended these lives prematurely and have caused great grief to the victims' families, loved ones, and communities.

Yet, each of us is more than the worst thing we have done. Mr. Bowles is more than a man who committed multiple murders. He is a human being who survived many years of childhood abuse and, after escaping his stepfather's violence as a young teenager, endured years of homelessness and child prostitution. Neuroscientific research has found that such traumatic experiences severely affect a child's developing brain, and thus affect subsequent behavior.

Intentionally ending Mr. Bowles' life is unnecessary. Society can remain safe from any future violent actions of his through life-long incarceration without parole. Premeditated, state-sanctioned homicide of Mr. Bowles would only perpetuate the cycle of violence that victimized him, and which he later perpetuated. Killing him will only further erode the sense of the sacredness of human life and implicate us all – the citizens of the State of Florida – in his death.

Floridians around the state will soon be gathering in prayer for all harmed by Mr. Bowles' actions, for him, and for an end to the use of the death penalty. We also pray for you as you consider this 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