



**TO: Commission on the Administration of Lethal Injection**

**FROM: Sheila S. Hopkins, Associate Director for Social Concerns**

**DATE: February 8, 2007**

On behalf of the Florida Catholic Conference, I take this opportunity to state our opposition to the use of lethal injection in the state of Florida.

Because executions are carried out in the name of the people of Florida and result in the death of an individual, we oppose the existing procedure that prohibits the public from being able to witness and understand the process that results in the painful preparation and death of a human being. Providing the public with full access to the process involved in these executions will inform them as to the true nature of this type of killing by the state, and allow them to express their views to representatives of government with an accurate view of what actually takes place in a lethal injection. We believe that this will lead many to reject this type of execution by the state.

Under F.S. Ch. 922, physicians, nurses, and pharmacists are not required to assist in any aspect of the execution that is contrary to their moral or ethical beliefs. This law, combined with the caution issued by the American Medical Association for health professionals to avoid participation in lethal injection, has contributed to the situation in which unqualified staff are attempting medical procedures intended to cause death.

Too often, society resorts to violence as the answer to complex human problems. The dignity of each human person, even those who have wronged others, is degraded when we resort to violence such as the use of lethal injection. The state of Florida should suspend all executions and exercise the option of life in prison without possibility of parole, sparing the families of the victims as well as the inmate from inhumane suffering.

Please contact me if you need any additional information. Thank you.

Sheila Hopkins  
Associate Director for Social Concerns