

# FLORIDA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

201 WEST PARK AVENUE  
TALLAHASSEE, FL 32301-7760

PHONE (850) 222-3803  
FAX (850) 205-6849  
WWW.FLACCB.ORG

MICHAEL B. SHEEDY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



February 6, 2023

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

## ***Re: Please stay execution of Donald Dillbeck and commute his death sentence***

Dear Governor DeSantis:

We are deeply disheartened that you have signed a fourth death warrant. As we approach the date of Donald Dillbeck's scheduled execution, we urge you to choose life over death for Mr. Dillbeck by granting a stay and commuting his death sentence to life without parole.

Mr. Dillbeck was convicted of and sentenced to death for the 1990 murder of Faye Vann, in Tallahassee, Florida. He is also serving life sentences for armed robbery and armed burglary, as well as for the 1979 killing of Lee County Deputy Sheriff Dwight Hall. His heinous and violent crimes have caused tremendous grief and suffering to the victims' loved ones and communities.

Yet, the Conference implores you to consider the mitigating circumstances in Mr. Dillbeck's case. Mr. Dillbeck endured multiple traumas throughout his life, including severe childhood physical and sexual abuse. Research shows that such trauma has severe effects on a child's developing brain, which can profoundly affect behavior. He also suffers from irreversible brain damage and developmental disabilities as a result of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome due to extreme prenatal alcohol exposure.

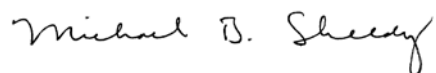
We also ask that you choose life for Mr. Dillbeck because of the harms caused by implementing the death penalty in Florida. Its use is a violation of the dignity of the person and an indictment on the low value placed on human life itself in society. We hold that the death penalty should be inadmissible due to modern systems of incarceration whereby society can be kept safe and prisoners punished. The alternative to the death penalty of life-long incarceration without parole is a severe and more appropriate form of punishment that does not perpetuate the cycle of societal violence by taking someone's life. Moving forward with Mr. Dillbeck's execution would only further coarsen society's views on the

sacredness of all human life and cause moral injury to the death row staff who must actively participate in his killing after spending years treating him with dignity and respect.

Please know that in staying Mr. Dillbeck's execution and commuting his sentence, you would have the support of the Church and of the many Floridians who support alternatives to the death penalty so that this cruel and unnecessary practice of state-sanctioned killing can end. Floridians around the state will soon be gathering in prayer for Ms. Vann and all who have been harmed by Mr. Dillbeck's actions, for him, for everyone affected by violent crime, 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 cursive script that reads "Michael B. Sheedy".

Michael B. Sheedy

Cc: Archbishop and Bishops of Florida  
Christie C. Arnold, Associate for Respect Life/Social Concerns