

FLORIDA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

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MICHAEL B. SHEEDY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



June 16, 2025

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

Re: Please stay the execution of Thomas Gudinas and commute his sentence

Dear Governor DeSantis,

We write to ask you to grant a stay of the execution of Thomas Gudinas and to commute his sentence to life without parole.

Gudinas was found guilty of the heinous sexual battery and murder of Michelle McGrath. We mourn the tragic death of Ms. McGrath. We acknowledge the pain and suffering of her family and friends, and we pray for their comfort. It is indeed a duty of the state to protect the lives and safety of its citizens and to impose appropriate punishment for crimes, and we recognize your responsibility in ensuring this duty is carried out.

We nevertheless urge you to spare Mr. Gudinas's life. Mr. Gudinas himself was abused as a child, was mentally impaired, and was hooked on drugs and alcohol—facts which should give us pause before putting him to death. All human life, given by God, is sacred. This sacredness is not contingent upon one's guilt or innocence. There is a way to punish without ending another human life. Life-long incarceration without the possibility of parole is a severe yet more humane punishment that ensures societal safety, allows the guilty the possibility of redemption, and offers finality to court processes.

In the Bible, the Lord asked through the prophet Ezekiel, "Do I find pleasure in the death of the wicked? Do I not rejoice when they turn from their evil way and live? . . . I find no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies" (Ez. 18:23, 32).

We urge you to spare Thomas Gudinas's life. We appeal to you that it is possible both to achieve the purposes of punishment and to exercise mercy. We can entrust the final judgment of every individual to God. We pray for you, too, Governor, 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: Jason Weida, Esq., Chief of Staff, Executive Office of the Governor
Catholic Bishops of Florida