

CATHOLIC CONFERENCE OF OHIO

July 21, 2009

The Honorable Ted Strickland
Governor of Ohio
Riffe Center
77 South High Street
Columbus, OH 43266-0601

Dear Governor Strickland:

On behalf of the Catholic Bishops of Ohio, I urge you to commute the death sentence of Jason Getsy to life without parole. He is scheduled for execution on August 18, 2009.

We are pleased that Mr. Getsy received a favorable recommendation from the state parole board for executive clemency. We urge you to enact this recommendation.

The Catholic Bishops of Ohio consistently have advocated for an end to the death penalty. We believe this form of punishment is unnecessary and systemically flawed. Viable and just alternatives, such as life imprisonment, are effectively used in other states and other countries.

In light of flawed legal rulings in Mr. Getsy's case, we repeat our call for the establishment of a non-partisan study commission that would provide an objective review of Ohio's death penalty system. This would be a helpful first step in addressing this difficult issue.

We offer our prayers and condolences to the family and friends of Ann Sarifino, as well as all victims of violent and senseless crimes. We pray for Mr. Getsy, his family and friends. We continue to pray for you and all who must participate in our state executions.

May God grant you His wisdom and courage. We look forward to the day when the death penalty is only remembered as part of Ohio history.

Respectfully,

Most Reverend Daniel E. Pilarczyk
Archbishop of Cincinnati