

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC
ARCHDIOCESE
OF **ATLANTA**
OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

Monday 12 September, 2011

James E. Donald, Chair
Georgia State Board of Pardons and Paroles
2 Martin Luther King, Jr Drive, S.E.
Suite 458, Balcony Level, East Tower
Atlanta, GA 30334-4909

Dear Mr. Donald and Members of the Board of Pardon and Parole:

As the bishops of the Catholic Church in Georgia, we are writing to urge you to grant clemency to Mr. Troy Davis. As you lawfully carry out justice for the sake of society, we ask you to show mercy and consider that every human being, whether innocent of wrongdoing or guilty of serious violations of the law, has an innate and inalienable value.

There are several issues involved in this tragic situation that we bring to you for consideration.

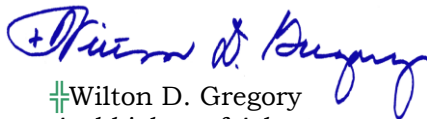
First, we want to express our profound sympathy to the family and friends of Officer Mark Allen Mac Phail whose life was taken in a criminal act. We believe that the State of Georgia has the right to punish the person who is responsible for this crime. We also believe that punishment and compensation can be achieved by incarceration with strict laws concerning parole.

Secondly, the death penalty is irreversibly wrong when there is an execution of a person who may possibly be innocent. The conviction and death sentence of Mr. Davis was based on testimony of key witnesses and did not result from physical evidence.

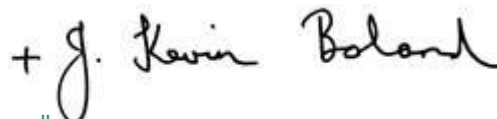
The gospel that Christians proclaim is a gospel of mercy, love and forgiveness. We believe that the death penalty is not compatible with the gospel. The common good and public security can be achieved in other ways. The gospel calls us to proclaim the sacredness of human life under all circumstances.

Thank you for your consideration of the 138 people who have been wrongly convicted in capital cases since 1976, six of whom were from Georgia. It is urgent that you reconsider the sentence of death in this case so that our state does not make an irreversible decision to take the life of Mr. Davis.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



‡Wilton D. Gregory
Archbishop of Atlanta



‡J. Kevin Boland
Bishop Emeritus of Savannah



‡Luis R. Zarama
Auxiliary Bishop of Atlanta



‡Gregory J. Hartmayer, OFM Conv.
Bishop-elect of Savannah

WDG/pmc