



Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston

Office of the Cardinal

June 13, 2011

The Honorable Rick Perry
Governor's Office
P.O. Box 12428
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Governor Perry,

On behalf of the Archdioceses of Galveston-Houston and San Antonio, we urge you to grant a stay of execution for Mr. Humberto Leal Garcia who is currently scheduled to be executed on July 7. As you know, the Roman Catholic Church does not believe the use of the death penalty is needed in our society anymore and in this case there is another compelling reason not to impose this irreversible sentence.

It is our understanding that Mr. Leal is a foreign national who has been scheduled for execution despite having never been given access to a consular representative from his native country, Mexico. Nor was the Mexican consulate ever notified after Mr. Leal's 1994 arrest. In 2004, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) held that Mr. Leal must have a hearing to determine if he was harmed by the United States' violation of the Vienna Convention. The U.S. Supreme Court unanimously agreed that the United States is obligated to comply with the ICJ decision, but that Congress must act to implement the Court's decision. Both the Bush and Obama administrations have sought to enforce the decision, and have supported federal legislation to provide hearings for Mr. Leal and other Mexican nationals denied their consular rights.

We believe that a stay of execution would allow time for Congress to remedy the violations in Mr. Leal's case. This is important because if Mr. Leal is executed despite the Vienna Convention violations, other nations could be emboldened to violate the consular rights of U.S. citizens arrested in foreign countries.

We have tremendous sympathy for the family of Adria Saucedo and in no way wish to diminish the suffering they have endured as a result of her death. Our Church fully believes that those who commit terrible, violent crimes must be incarcerated, both as just punishment and in order to protect society. We stand in solidarity with victims and their loved ones. However, when it comes to matters of life and death, morality and common sense call for justice, mercy, and for careful safeguards.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus teaches that a true neighbor is one who shows mercy (Luke 10:37). Showing mercy does not mean neglecting to administer justice or punish people for their crimes. Showing mercy does mean exhibiting

The Honorable Rick Perry
Page 2
June 13, 2011

compassion toward all of our brothers and sisters, and providing them with an opportunity for atonement and rehabilitation.

As Christians, we are taught that mercy triumphs over judgment (James 2:13). Our society has the means of effectively rendering criminals harmless in order to provide them with an opportunity for reform, yet the death penalty denies them this opportunity. It is our teaching that if bloodless means are sufficient to defend human lives against an aggressor and to protect public order and the safety of persons, which is the case in our society, public authority should limit itself to such means, because they better correspond to the concrete conditions of the common good and are more in conformity to the dignity of the human person (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*).

We continue to pray for the Saucedo family. We also pray for Humberto Leal, his family and all those affected by Adria Saucedo's death. And, because of our conviction that mercy truly does triumph over judgment, we urge you to grant a stay of execution.

Yours in Christ,

+Daniel Cardinal DiNardo

Daniel Cardinal DiNardo
Archbishop of Galveston-Houston
1700 San Jacinto
Houston, Texas 77002
(713) 659-5461

+Gustavo Garcia Siller

Most Reverend Gustavo Garcia Siller
Archbishop of San Antonio
2718 W. Woodlawn Ave.
San Antonio, Texas, 78228
(210)734-2620

DND/GGS/acl