



3339 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20008-3610

APOSTOLIC NUNCIATURE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Prot. No. -16968

September 7, 2010

Dear Governor Beshear:

His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI has come to learn that Mr. Gregory Wilson, incarcerated in the Commonwealth of Kentucky, is scheduled to be executed on September 16, 2010. As the personal representative of the Holy Father in the United States, I ask you to commute the sentence of Mr. Wilson to life in prison without parole.

I am also deeply conscious of the suffering that is felt each day by the relatives and loved ones of any victim of a violent crime. Therefore, this request for clemency is a heartfelt call for mercy beyond the strict confines of justice.

Governor Beshear, you have been entrusted with the authority and power to govern and to lead by example. During his Pastoral Visit to the United States of America, at the Welcoming Ceremony on the South Lawn of the White House, His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI spoke of a moral order "based on the dominion of God the Creator" and the centrality of this conviction in American history. I urge you to reflect on the words spoken by Pope Benedict that morning: "*Democracy can only flourish, as your founding fathers realized, when political leaders and those whom they represent are guided by truth and bring the wisdom born of firm moral principle to decisions affecting the life and future of the nation*" [16 April 2008]. In this regard, I ask you to hear the call of the Church for the abolition of capital punishment. Please allow yourself to reflect on the Holy Father's plea and use your authority to help shape a society in which all human life is recognized as sacred.

Mr. Governor, I take this opportunity to assure you of my prayers for you. In conclusion, I reiterate the commitment of the Holy Father to uphold the sacredness and dignity of all human life and I hope that you will give heed to his petition.

Respectfully and truly yours,

Archbishop Pietro Sambi
Apostolic Nuncio

The Honorable Steven L. Beshear
Governor
Commonwealth of Kentucky
700 Capitol Avenue, Suite 100
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601