FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CATHOLIC BISHOPS REQUEST THAT BROWN EXECUTION BE COMMUTED

(Seattle) In a letter to Gov. Christine Gregoire the bishops of Washington’s three Catholic dioceses have requested that she commute the death sentence of Cal Coburn Brown to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole.

Brown, 50, is scheduled to be executed at 12:01 a.m. on Friday, March 13 at the Washington State Penitentiary in Walla Walla.

“The demands of justice require a severe punishment for Mr. Brown’s crimes, and as pastors we are sensitive to the pain of the victim and her family,” said Seattle Archbishop Alex J. Brunett, chairman of the Washington State Catholic Conference. “But while our sympathies rightfully rest with the victim and her loved ones, we must not be motivated by a desire for retribution that binds us to a cycle of violence.”


The three bishops made their request to Gov. Gregoire in a letter dated March 12 (See bishops’ letter attached).

“As pastoral leaders in Washington state, we join our voices in opposition to the death penalty,” Archbishop Brunett said. “The state has an obligation to carry out justice on behalf of the victims of violent crimes and to protect the public from violent criminals like Mr. Brown. However, we believe the demands of justice are met and the protection of innocent life achieved with a life sentence without the possibility of parole.

“With the modern methods of incarceration available today, there remains no practical justification for imposing a sentence of death, and when we sanction executions as a means to deter violent crime, we only perpetuate the violence we seek to prohibit,” Archbishop Brunett added.

Brown would be the first inmate put to death in Washington since James Elledge was executed in August 2001.

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For more information, contact:  Greg Magnoni  206-382-4862