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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Kentucky's Catholic Bishops Urge Governor to Stop Marco Chapman's Execution**

Frankfort, November 11 – Kentucky's four Catholic Bishops released a statement today renewing their request that Gov. Steve Beshear grant clemency to Marco Chapman, whose execution is set for 7:00 p. m. (CT) on November 21, 2008. They made their original request of the governor following a meeting with him in early July.

The bishops recognized the horror of Chapman's crimes, having killed two children, Cody and Chelbi Sharon, and raped their mother, Carolyn Marksberry, as well as attempting to kill her and another daughter, Courtney. In a July letter following their meeting with the governor, they wrote about the pain of these victims and their loved ones: "Their anguish is unfathomable. They deserve our compassion, solidarity, and support."

In today's statement they ask "all of Kentucky's citizens to pray for the family and friends of Cody, Chelbi, Courtney and their mother, Carolyn Marksberry, along with other victims of violent crime. None of us can fully appreciate the pain and anguish they have experienced because few of us have walked in their shoes."

They also point out that "God alone is the author of life and the arbiter of death." To the bishops it appears that Chapman's own actions have placed him in the position of playing God with his life and inviting us to join him in doing so. Taking note of his past efforts to kill himself and of his almost daily contemplation of suicide, they write, "His request, and the State's willingness to grant it, demeans all of us, and makes us, perhaps unwittingly, participants in the suicidal ideations of a man unwilling to take responsibility for his tragic decisions." And they further add, "For the State of Kentucky to help him in this delusion is inappropriate and does not promote justice."

They conclude the statement by asking "all persons of good will to appeal to Gov. Steve Beshear and our State legislators to dismantle the death penalty in Kentucky and relinquish the false belief that lethal injection is the answer to one of society's most complex problems. It is time to take the road less traveled and lead Kentuckians into a new culture of life and love."

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Attachments: Letter to Governor Steve Beshear, July 3, 2008  
Statement on Marco Chapman's Execution

*The Catholic Conference of Kentucky (CCK) is an agency of the Catholic Bishops of Kentucky, established in 1968. It speaks for the Church in matters of public policy, serves as liaison to government and the legislature, and coordinates communications and activities between the church and secular agencies. There are 406,000 Catholics in the Commonwealth. The Bishops of the four dioceses of KY constitute CCK's Board of Directors.*