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**KENTUCKY BISHOPS URGE GOVERNOR TO PROMOTE A CULTURE OF LIFE
AND COMMUTE BOWLING'S SENTENCE**

FRANKFORT —In a meeting this morning with Governor Ernie Fletcher, Kentucky's Catholic Bishops asked Governor Fletcher to commute Thomas Bowling's sentence of death to life without parole rather than signing the execution warrant requested by the Attorney General. They followed that meeting with a letter to the Governor reiterating their request.

The Bishops expressed appreciation to the Governor for promoting a Culture of Life in his work to eliminate abortion, preclude cloning, prevent embryonic stem cell research, and by his signing into law the fetal homicide bill that holds accountable those who would kill the unborn, and shows further respect for life by forbidding the death sentence when fetal homicide is proven.

"October is Respect Life month in the Catholic Church," noted Archbishop Thomas C. Kelly, O.P., Chair of the Board of the Catholic Conference of Kentucky. Archbishop Kelly said, "A fundamental teaching of the Catholic Church is the dignity of every person. Life is sacred. Every person is made in the image and likeness of God. Thomas Bowling is a child of God."

Bishop John McRaith of Owensboro emphasized that "the Church has a prophetic mission to remind the world that God is the Lord of Life and all human life is sacred and belongs to him alone. Rejection of the death penalty is part of the Church's opposition to every attack upon human life. It is in line with the struggle against abortion, against euthanasia, against the destruction of a nuclear war."

In meeting with Governor Fletcher, the Bishops proclaimed the sacredness not only of innocent life, but even of the life of the guilty.

In a letter to Governor Fletcher the Bishops said, "God's justice is not blind. It is imbued with mercy. We ask that you, as a man of faith and as a moral leader in Kentucky, provide mercy to Thomas Bowling."