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

APOSTOLIC NUNCIATURE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Prot. N. 12300

29 September 2015

Dear Members of the Board,

As the personal representative of His Holiness Pope Francis to the United States of America, I make an urgent appeal, on his behalf, for the commutation of the death sentence of Ms. Kelly Gissendaner, who is scheduled to be executed later today.

As the Holy Father said in his address to the Joint Session of Congress last Thursday:

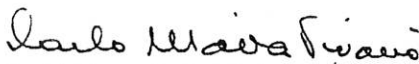
“This conviction [of our responsibility to defend human life at every stage] has led me, from the beginning of my ministry, to advocate at different levels for the global abolition of the death penalty. I am convinced that this way is the best, since every life is sacred, every human person is endowed with an inalienable dignity, and society can only benefit from the rehabilitation of those convicted of crimes.”

While not wishing to minimize the gravity of the crime for which Ms. Gissendaner has been convicted, and while sympathizing with the victims, I nonetheless implore you, in consideration of the reasons that have been presented to your Board, to commute the sentence to one that would better express both justice and mercy.

Please be assured of my prayers as you consider this request by Pope Francis for what I believe would be a just act of clemency.

With deep respect and appreciation for your dedicated service to the people of Georgia, I am

Sincerely yours,

+ 
Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò
Apostolic Nuncio

State Board of Pardons and Paroles
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Suite 458, Balcony Level, East Tower
Atlanta, GA 30334-4909

cc: The Honorable Nathan Deal, Governor
The Most Rev. Wilton D. Gregory, Archbishop of Atlanta