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Statement following Stay of Execution of Christa Pike

Bishop J. Mark Spalding of Nashville, Bishop David P. Talley of Memphis, and Bishop Mark Beckman of Knoxville release the following statement responding to the stay of execution of Christa Pike through the Tennessee Catholic Conference.

First and foremost, we pray for the soul of Colleen Slemmer, who Christa Pike was convicted of murdering more than 30 years ago. We also pray for Colleen's family and friends that they may find the consolation and healing that only God can provide.

The Church, shepherded by Pope Leo XIV, has restated its opposition to the death penalty as an attack on human dignity and unnecessary to protect society while still punishing those convicted of horrible crimes. The bishops of Nashville, Memphis, and Knoxville together through the Tennessee Catholic Conference, petitioned Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee on Sept. 10, 2026, to halt Ms. Pike's execution. We restate that call as courts continue to consider legal issues in the case.

The Dioceses of Nashville, Memphis, and Knoxville will continue to stand as pro-life in all things, championing the human dignity that everyone possesses as a child of God.

END

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