



## Diocese of Austin

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Office of the Bishop

### **Statement in Support of Melissa Lucio**

Melissa Lucio is scheduled to be executed by the state of Texas on April 27, 2022. Despite thousands of pages of protective service records and recorded interviews with her children showing that Melissa was not abusive, she was convicted and sentenced to death for causing the death of her two-year old daughter, Mariah. Lacking any solid physical evidence or eyewitnesses, prosecutors used Melissa's coerced confession, taken after a five-hour late night and aggressive interrogation, as the evidence for this decision. Doubt has been cast on the mitigating circumstances, the accidental nature of the injuries and the method in which evidence was portrayed.

Melissa's spiritual advisor, Deacon Ronnie Lastovica of the Diocese of Austin, is accompanying Melissa on her journey. He has seen how her heart is centered on Christ and how she has been helping bring others to the Lord.

*"We are created in God's image and as such we must commit to protecting every human being and caring for their soul. People of goodwill understand that an act of violence cannot be overcome with another act of violence. The execution of Melissa Lucio would be a tragedy. Members of her own family, especially her children, are pleading for Melissa's life to be spared. Our faith teaches us that our response must be rooted in justice and mercy. Together let us pray to bring an end to the death penalty so that we may develop a greater love and respect for the sacred dignity of human life."*

Most Reverend Joe S. Vásquez  
Bishop of Austin

February 23, 2022