



Where Justice and Truth Meet

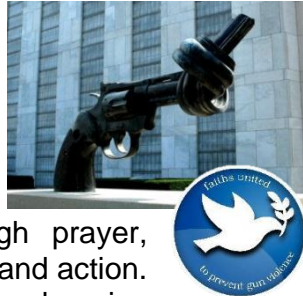
March 2014

“With active hope we choose to imagine the world we want to inhabit and accept the urgent responsibility to collaborate in bringing it to birth.” *Together – Birthing Anew, Chapter 2014*

These words from our General Chapter statement challenge us to live ever more fully our Dominican heritage of contemplation and action. We are called to address issues of gun violence and immigration both by prayerfully imagining the world we want to inhabit and by acting collaboratively and responsibly to bring it to birth.

Gun Violence Sabbath

From **Friday, March 14 to Sunday, March 16**, thousands of places of worship will participate in the 2014 Gun Violence Prevention Sabbath through prayer, education, acts of kindness and action. In the six states where comprehensive gun violence prevention laws exist, there has been a significant decrease in gun violence. Participating in the Gun Violence Sabbath is as easy as incorporating a prayer, hymn, reading or educational activity into prayer gatherings. [Event ideas and prayer resources](#) are available at *Faiths United to Prevent Gun Violence*.



Convergence of Purpose

The *Leadership Conference of Women Religious*, one of 50+ faith-based organizations that support *Faiths United to Prevent Gun Violence*, passed a [resolution to end gun violence](#) at their August 2013 National General Assembly. The opening statement of that resolution echoes the words of our Springfield Dominican corporate stance on a Consistent Ethic of Life, adopted in June, 2013:

We, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, are compelled to work toward a world where reverence for all living beings finds expression in an approach to life free from violence.

The LCWR resolution goes on to focus on gun violence: *We stand in solidarity with the victims of violence, with a majority of the American people, and with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops as we heed the Gospel call to nonviolence and seek to persuade our local, state, and federal officials to enact laws that will:*

- *require universal background checks for all gun purchases;*
- *restrict civilian access to assault weapons and high capacity magazines;*
- *make gun trafficking a federal crime;*
- *improve access to mental health care and other services for those in need;*
- *fund programs that make available educational materials on the effects of violence and provide opportunities for youth and young adults to end gang violence.*



Shoes we can never fill

One creative idea to raise awareness and protest gun violence is offered by [Silent March](#), a nonprofit organization that uses empty shoes, many belonging to victims of gun violence, to graphically illustrate America's preventable epidemic of firearm-related death, injury and trauma. Rows and rows of eloquent, silent shoes, going nowhere, is a "silent march."

Silent March is not just a memorial. It is a call to action demanding that our government act swiftly, intelligently and boldly on the issue of gun violence, in the interest of saving lives.



Resource: [Prayer service to end gun violence](#)

We believe in the interconnection of all life which is at the heart of a consistent ethic of life. We commit to the protection of the whole of life on Earth. Our commitment fundamentally requires a conversion of heart and compels us to address any injustice that diminishes the community of life. We reverence the sacredness of life and address injustice in a spirit of respect, compassion, and solidarity.

Springfield Dominican Corporate Stance, 2013

Firearm Concealed Carry in Illinois



On July 9, 2013 the Firearm Concealed Carry Act (FCCA) was enacted in the state of Illinois. The first permits were recently issued by the Illinois State Police. The FCCA bars firearms from “prohibited areas.” These include hospitals, schools, colleges, government buildings, public transportation, gaming facilities and most bars, as well as other specified types of facilities. Owners of prohibited areas are not required to post signs stating that firearms are banned from their properties but may choose to do so.

Churches, parish offices, motherhouses or convents, other offices/institutions of a diocese and all other business are not currently included in the “prohibited areas” of the act. The act does allow these businesses and groups to ban firearms by posting [official signs](#) at the entrances to their buildings, premises, or properties.

Employers that do not fall under one of the “prohibited area” categories have the right to bar their employees from bringing firearms into their facilities or onto their lands with the exception of parking lots. The parking lot exception means the licensee may have the concealed firearm in his/her car concealed in a case out of plain view within a locked vehicle or locked container within the vehicle in the parking area.

Private property designated by the owner as a no-carry zone must post [designated 4”x6” signs](#) clearly and conspicuously at the entrance of the property to notify licensees that the carrying of concealed firearms is prohibited on the premises.



The struggles for freedom and dignity led by Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr. and Cesar Chavez showed the world that faithful sacrifice and courageous nonviolent action can break the bonds of injustice. Each of them was told again and again to “wait”—just as millions of undocumented immigrant brothers and sisters within our borders are waiting today. While Congress delays a vote on comprehensive immigration reform, families continue to be divided by deportations, children transferred to

foster care, students trapped in uncertainty, and workers exploited and relegated to invisibility.

[Fast for Families](#) invites us to fast each Wednesday during Lent to repent from an immigration system that tears apart families. Our fasting can become a prophetic witness to the moral urgency of commonsense immigration reform so that all might have the opportunity to be citizens with equal respect and dignity. Grounded in the word of God spoken through the prophets, we are encouraged to fast and pray to move the compassion of elected leadership in the House, and to inspire a resilient movement to cease the deportations, suffering, sorrow and fear, and to usher in a new structure of laws for the good of our country and for the sake of our values.



The [Fast for Families Bus Tour](#) will be in Springfield on March 20 to visit the offices of Aaron Schock and Rodney Davis.

“Our efforts do make a difference”

On January 8, 2013, the Illinois House passed SB957 which enables undocumented immigrants in Illinois to get a temporary visitor driver's license. Illinois is only the fourth state to pass this law, and it only happened after years of e-mails and calls to state Senators and Representatives. A student came recently to her class at the [Dominican Literacy Center in Aurora](#) with a big smile on her face announcing that she had gotten her driver's license. Now, she could drive to her job, shop and take care of family business feeling secure and confident. Other students also have appointments to get their licenses. Sr. Jane Ann Beckman says that she sees how our efforts for immigration reform are making a difference in the lives of people.



Lenten Resources

Fast for Families [Fasters' Declaration](#)

[The Gospels and Immigration](#): reflections for each week of Lent

[Lenten Prayer Calendar](#): Through prayer and encouragement, we believe we can change the hearts and minds of Catholic members of Congress to support immigration reform. Say a short prayer for the selected member of Congress each day and then pick up the phone to share your prayer.