

October 30, 2008
Office of the Bishop
Diocese of Chicago

Stop the Killing

With people everywhere we mourn the violent deaths of children and adults in the city of Chicago. We must do everything in our power to bring to an end the cycles of violence that result in the murders of children in this city. So much of this violence is rooted in the despair of poverty and racism. It feeds on hopelessness and the devaluation of life, and is fueled by the ready availability of guns and the alternative appeal of gang life. In many instances the violence is not on the street but in the home—a parent, spouse, partner or sibling taking their anger out on another family member. October, which is designated domestic violence awareness month, has seen over 30 deaths by violence in Chicago, several being adults or children killed by family members.

For Christians every murder is a blasphemous act because every man, woman and child who lives or dies is made in the image of God. I call upon all of us who follow Christ to do everything in our power in taking action against the perpetuation of systems of injustice and discrimination in our society. We must also be more alert to the incidence of family violence in our communities, educating our members, speaking out against domestic violence and sexual assault, and providing safe space and solace for victims and those mourning the loss of a loved one.

We, the church, are here to bear the heartbreak of those in grief, and bear witness to the ending of this carnage. Let us pledge ourselves to join hands with city government, schools, agencies, and all people of faith to stop the killing. I ask our churches to redouble their efforts to offer an alternative to the allure of violence, a vision of community in Christ which leads to abundant life and a future of hope. The Lord Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus his friend. He also called people into unimaginable new life. Let us follow his example.

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