



# DOMINICAN SISTERS OF SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

Office of Communication

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## For Immediate Release

### For More Information Contact

Sister Beth Murphy, OP

O: 217-787-0481

C: 312-780-9553

## DOMINICAN SISTERS LEADERSHIP IN SOLIDARITY WITH VICTIMS OF MISSISSIPPI ICE RAIDS

### *Call for Compassion, Understanding, and an End to Practices that Create Fear*

**Springfield, Ill.**— “In recognition of the rights and dignity of children and families frightened and separated during the ICE raids on August 7, 2019” in Mississippi, the leadership of the Dominican Sisters of Springfield, Illinois, “cry out” in solidarity compassion, and support.

The sisters offer their solidarity to all those affected by the raids and “those who are living in fear,” the statement says. “We hope that you and your families can feel the support of our prayers.”

Springfield Dominican Sisters have ministered in Mississippi for more than 70 years. Their ministry, St. Dominic Health Services, was transferred July 1, 2019, to the sponsorship of Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady Health System, based in Baton Rouge, La. Eight Dominican sisters continue to live and serve in Jackson.

The statement, issued from the congregation’s Illinois-based leadership, asks that “all people of good will in Mississippi” acknowledge that the trauma created by a broken immigration system “Unravels the bond of our common humanity and weakens the foundation of trust” essential to every Mississippian’s well-being and safety.

“At the foundation of our desire for a more just immigration policy is gospel-based Catholic Social Teaching,” said Sister Rebecca Ann Gemma, prioress general of the Springfield Dominican Sisters. “The United States Catholic Bishops have very clear guidelines on this.”

For access to resources from the bishops and other helpful materials for those accompanying immigrants anywhere in the U.S., visit [springfieldop.org/immigration-resources](http://springfieldop.org/immigration-resources).

The sisters encourage donations of time, expertise, and financial assistance to one of two Mississippi-based organizations. Donations may be made through [Catholic Charities](#) of the Diocese of Jackson or through a [coalition of Mississippi organizations](#) responding to the needs of immigrant families.

Sacred Heart Convent, 1237 West Monroe Street, Springfield, Illinois  
Phone: 217-787-0481 Fax: 217-787-8169 Email: [sbmurphy@spdom.org](mailto:sbmurphy@spdom.org)

The coalition includes the Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance (MIRA), and the MacArthur Center for Justice at the University of Mississippi.

For more than 800 years, Dominicans have preached the Gospel in word and deed. The Dominican Sisters of Springfield, established in 1873, are part of a worldwide Dominican family, the Order of Preachers. Today, thousands of Dominican sisters, nuns, priests, brothers, associates, and laity minister in more than 100 countries around the world. To learn more about the Dominican Sisters of Springfield visit [springfieldop.org](http://springfieldop.org).

**The complete statement, in English and Spanish, follows.**

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A Statement of Solidarity with the Victims of ICE Raids in Mississippi, August 7, 2019  
from the Leadership of the Dominican Sisters of Springfield, Illinois  
August 12, 2019

In solidarity with the immigrant families of Mississippi, we cry out, as our Sister Catherine of Siena has exhorted us to do, with “a thousand voices” in recognition of the rights and dignity of children and families frightened and separated during the ICE raids on August 7, 2019, and in other similar but less publicized events throughout the state.

For more than 70 years we Dominican Sisters of Springfield Illinois have lived among and served the people of Mississippi, providing health and healing of body and soul for untold numbers of its residents, while safeguarding each person’s human dignity.

To all our brothers and sisters affected by the raids and all those who are living in fear, please know that we stand with you in any way possible. We hope that you and your families can feel the support of our prayers.

We encourage all who bear the name “Christian”—and all people of good will in Mississippi—to recognize that the trauma created by a broken immigration system unravels the bond of our common humanity and weakens the foundation of trust essential to the well-being and safety of every Mississippian. Along with the bishops of Mississippi, we call for an immediate response of compassion for the families disrupted by the raids. We encourage acts of empathy and Christian charity toward the children, women and men who have suffered this trauma. Contributions of time, expertise, and financial assistance may be made through the organizations listed below.

We welcome every sincere effort to understand the systems and policies—in our nation and in the immigrant residents’ countries of origin—that push them from their homes and pull them toward the dream of a better life in the United States. We call for an end to practices and policies that create a climate of fear in our cities, faith communities, and homes.

Finally, in fidelity to our common call as women consecrated to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we offer our contemplation of that Gospel to the cause of healing for our beloved Mississippi, our nation and our world.

Donations to support the needs of Mississippi families affected by the raids may be made to:

[Catholic Charities](#), Diocese of Jackson or to a [coalition of Mississippi organizations](#) responding to the needs of immigrant families, including ACLU, Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance (MIRA), and the MacArthur Center for Justice at the University of Mississippi.

Sister Rebecca Ann Gemma, OP  
Prioress General

Sister Rose Miriam Schulte, OP  
Vicaress General

Sister Mila Díaz Solano, OP  
Councilor

Sister Marie Michelle Hackett, OP  
Councilor

*The statement follows in Spanish.*

**Declaración de solidaridad con las víctimas de las redadas de ICE en Mississippi el 7 de agosto del 2019 por el Liderazgo de las Hermanas Dominicanas de Springfield  
12 de agosto del 2019**

En solidaridad con las familias inmigrantes de Mississippi, clamamos con “mil voces” como nuestra Hermana Catalina de Siena nos ha exhortado a hacer, porque reconocemos los derechos y la dignidad de los niños y las familias asustadas y separadas durante las redadas de ICE en 7 de agosto de 2019 y en otros eventos similares que no han alcanzado cobertura en los medios del estado.

Durante más de 70 años, las Hermanas Dominicanas de Springfield, Illinois, hemos vivido y servido en Mississippi, brindando salud y sanación del cuerpo y alma a un número incontable de residentes, al tiempo que procurábamos la dignidad humana de cada persona.

A todos nuestros hermanos y hermanas afectados por las redadas y a quienes viven con miedo, sepan que estamos con ustedes a través de los medios que están a nuestro alcance. Esperamos también que ustedes y sus familias puedan sentir el apoyo de nuestras oraciones.

Animamos a todos los que llevan el nombre de “cristianos”, y a todas las personas de buena voluntad en Mississippi, a reconocer que el trauma creado por un sistema quebrado de inmigración deshace el vínculo de nuestra humanidad común y debilita los cimientos de confianza esenciales para el bienestar y seguridad de todos los habitantes de Mississippi. Junto con los obispos de Mississippi, pedimos una respuesta de compasión inmediata para con las familias afectadas por las redadas. Alentamos los actos de empatía y caridad cristiana hacia los niños, mujeres y hombres que han sufrido este trauma. La donación de su tiempo, experiencia profesional y asistencia financiera pueden realizarse a través de las organizaciones que se enumeran al final.

Agradecemos todos los esfuerzos sinceros por comprender los sistemas y las políticas en nuestra nación y las estructuras en los países de origen de las personas inmigrantes, que los han obligado a salir de sus hogares y los han empujado a venir con el sueño de una vida mejor en los Estados Unidos. Hacemos un llamado para poner fin a las prácticas y políticas que crean un clima de miedo en nuestras ciudades, comunidades de fe y hogares.

Finalmente, en fidelidad a nuestro llamado común de predicar el Evangelio de Jesucristo como mujeres consagradas, ofrecemos nuestra contemplación de ese Evangelio por la sanación de nuestro querido Mississippi, nuestra nación y nuestro mundo.

Se pueden hacer donaciones para apoyar las necesidades de las familias de Mississippi afectadas por las redadas en: Catholic Charities, Diócesis de Jackson o la coalition of Mississippi organizations que responden a las necesidades de las familias inmigrantes, incluidas ACLU, Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance (MIRA) y el Centro MacArthur para la Justicia en la Universidad de Mississippi.

Sister Rebecca Ann Gemma, OP  
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