Blog
Social Justice



People carry personal belongings at a damaged building in Catia La Mar, Venezuela, Jan. 4, 2026, following U.S. strikes the previous day on Venezuela during which President Nicolas Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, were captured. (OSV News/Reuters/Gaby Oraa)



by Dan Stockman

View Author Profile
dstockman@ncronline.org

Join the Conversation

January 12, 2026

Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

Sisters across the United States responded to the Jan. 3 military attack on Venezuela , which resulted in the capture and arrests of the Venezuelan president and his wife, decrying the violence, calling for discussion and diplomacy over military action, and prayers for the Venezuelan people.

The Leadership Conference of Women Religious reiterated that it "stands with all people whose lives are threatened by violence, war, and hatred."

"Rooted in our faith, we profess our unwavering belief in the dignity, value, and rights of every human person and our commitment to the sacredness of human life," the LCWR statement said.

LCWR also reached out to sisters in South America, saying it "stands in solidarity with our sisters and brothers of the Confederation of Latin American Religious (CLAR) and with the consistent teaching of the Church in opposing the use of military force as a means of resolving political and democratic crises."

"Violence and war do not bring peace; they deepen suffering, destabilize nations, and place the most vulnerable at greatest risk," the statement said.

It also acknowledged that the regime running Venezuela needs profound changes, as do other countries nearby.

"We urge the administration and all members of Congress to cease any military involvement in Venezuela and to support international efforts that foster fair elections, a peaceful transfer of power, and conditions in which democracy can truly flourish. The people of Venezuela deserve the freedom to determine their own future without coercion, violence, or external domination," the statement said. "We recognize that these same threats endanger other countries throughout Latin America, and we affirm our solidarity with all peoples whose sovereignty, dignity, and democratic aspirations are placed at risk by similar forces."

Advertisement

The Adrian Dominicans issued a statement saying they stand with LCWR in its response.

The Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns also acknowledged the deep need for change in Venezuela, but expressed "profound sorrow and alarm" at the forced removal of the country's leadership by the U.S. military.

"Our friendship with the people of Venezuela is rooted in the Gospel's call to peace and the defense of human dignity. While we have long advocated for justice and the relief of suffering for the Venezuelan people, we believe that violence and unilateral military intervention are never the path to reconciliation," the statement said. "The bombardment of military bases and the capture of President Nicolás Maduro violate U.S. and international law, and risk igniting a wider conflict that will displace thousands and claim the lives of the most vulnerable — the poor families in the barrios of Caracas and rural communities throughout Venezuela."

The Maryknoll statement also urged Congress to limit the Trump administration's military actions.

"We call on Congress to assert its constitutional responsibility by invoking the War Powers Resolution to stop any further military action by the administration in the region," the Maryknoll statement said.

"We ask all people to join us in prayer for the safety of our brothers and sisters in Venezuela and for the wisdom of our leaders who hold the lives of so many in their hands."



A woman prays while holding a hat in the colors of the Venezuelan flag, during a Mass for Venezuela held in Spanish at the Church of the Most Holy Redeemer in Rome Jan. 4, 2026. (OSV News/Reuters/Matteo Minnella)

The National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd denounced the U.S. military actions, saying its sisters have lived a mission of compassion and

justice with the disenfranchised in Venezuela for 100 years.

The Sisters of the Good Shepherd statement said the actions only further destabilize "a country plagued by economic collapse and harsh authoritarian rule," and they "set a dangerous precedent, risking spreading unrest and U.S. interventionism across South America and the Caribbean."

The statement also reiterates a sad, but profound truth: "Violence and war do not bring peace, and those on the margins suffer the most." The sisters said they stand with Pope Leo XIV, who calls for the well-being of the people in Venezuela to "prevail over every other consideration."

Laurie Carafone, the executive director of Network Lobby for Catholic Social Justice, also cited Pope Leo XIV's stance, saying, "The good of the beloved Venezuelan people must prevail, ensuring justice and peace that respects the human and civil rights of every person."

She went on to write, "Catholic Social Justice affirms democracy, the rule of law, and societies where all people have what they need to thrive and participate in the decisions that shape their lives."

Her statement also took the United States government to task over the legal issues raised by the attack.

"The Trump administration's armed invasion of Venezuela without Congressional consultation and approval raises serious questions under U.S. and international law," the statement said. "This Administration is immorally putting at risk both the lives of American and Venezuelan people to exploit Venezuela's vast oil resources as they seek to line the pockets of big oil companies and themselves."

Adrian Dominicans to close Siena Heights University

The Adrian Dominican Sisters are praying their university campus will find new life.



Sr. Elise García, prioress of the Adrian Dominicans, is seen in her office in December 2025. (GSR photo/Dan Stockman)

Siena Heights University and the congregation have established a "Phoenix Committee" to consider new possibilities for the campus and its buildings. Siena Heights, which opened in 1919 in Adrian, Michigan, shares its campus with the congregation's motherhouse.

University officials announced in June it would close at the end of this academic year.

The Phoenix Committee is a joint panel of university officials, sisters, and community members from the surrounding area. It is chaired by the university president and

Adrian Dominican Prioress Sr. Elise García.

The committee is named for the metaphor of new life and renewal that members of the committee hope will arise through the idea-vetting and review process they are starting, and has hired a nonprofit organization of commercial property officials to help out.

In tandem with the evaluation process, the committee will invite proposals from educational institutions, community organizations and other interested parties.

At the end of the process, the university's board of trustees will make recommendations to the sisters' General Council, which is the institution's founding sponsor and has final approval.