Blog
Social Justice

People walk past damaged buildings in Tehran, Iran, March 4, 2026, following a strike on a police station, amid the U.S. and Israel-Iran war. (OSV News/WANA via Reuters/Majid Asgaripour)

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With the U.S.- and Israeli-led war against Iran now in its second week, four U.S.-based sister congregations have come out strongly against the war, calling it a violation of international law and also expressing deep dismay over the loss of civilian lives.

"The U.S. attack on Iran is a heinous act of aggression, using war and violence to resolve a dispute, rather than seeking nonviolent alternatives," the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas said in a March 3 statement.

The statements — which also came from the Felician Sisters of North America, the Adrian Dominicans and the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace — shared a common call for "peace, diplomacy and de-escalation," as the Felician Sisters of North America put it.

The Felician Sisters added: "Our stance reflects core Catholic principles: war must be a last resort; the innocent must be protected and the common good prioritized. Leaders and citizens alike are called to work courageously for justice, reconciliation, and human flourishing."

Similarly, the Sisters of Mercy, saying they are committed to "nonviolence and working for peace through prayer, education and personal and communal practices," strongly criticized the Trump administration for ending negotiations with Iran over Iran's nuclear weapons development.

The statement noted that negotiations that were underway "could have allowed more time to find creative and nonviolent solutions."

The congregation said the Trump administration "justifiably demonized a vicious regime for killing thousands of protestors" — a reference to the Iranian government's recent human rights violations.

But it also noted that, on the first day of the U.S. bombing "among the first victims were dozens of innocent girls killed when their school was bombed in the U.S.-led attacks."

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It added that President Donald Trump "has shown a callous disregard for human life, saying about the deaths of U.S. troops, 'there will likely be more before it ends. That's the way it is.' "

In its statement issued on March 3, the Adrian Dominican Sisters and Associates said they concurred with Pope Leo XIV in what the group described as the pontiff's "heartfelt appeal" to "all responsible parties, including [Trump] and the U.S. Congress, to halt the spiral of violence in the Middle East."

The Adrian Dominicans, the statement said, "are deeply troubled to see our nation resort to the horrific violence of war to solve disputes — and without authorization by the U.S. Congress as our Constitution requires. We are facing what Pope Leo rightly called 'the possibility of a tragedy of immense proportions.' "

While joining the pontiff's appeal to all parties involved "to assume the moral responsibility of halting the spiral of violence before it becomes an unbridgeable chasm," the sisters also said, "As American citizens, we call on President Trump and our nation's leaders in Congress to bring a halt to our calamitous bombing and re-initiate diplomacy."

In its March 3 statement, the leadership team of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace said it "condemns any use of violence and warmaking, especially as a way of resolving conflicts and disagreement."

The statement cited the congregation's 2008 chapter commitment, which committed the congregation "to grow more deeply toward a nonviolent way of being and acting as peacemakers."

A view of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., March 2, 2026 (OSV News/Reuters/Ken Cedeno)

As such, the congregation declared "that violence is an action that never yields healing and reconciliation," and so the sisters are "obligated to name the evil that accompanies war and violence. The wounds that are opened in warfare are not only physical, but also have the capability to destroy communities, families, and corrupt the spirits of all people engaged in warfare — from soldiers, to decisionmakers, to women and children and the elderly who are viewed as collateral damage."

In its March 2 statement, the Felician Sisters of North America said they were affirming "their unwavering commitment to human dignity, peace and justice in response to the ongoing conflict involving Iran."

"As a community dedicated to serving those most vulnerable, we are deeply concerned about the escalating violence and its devastating impact on civilians," said Sr. Maryann Agnes Mueller, the congregation's justice and peace coordinator.

"Our prayers are with all who are suffering, and we call on all parties to pursue peace through dialogue, diplomacy and respect for human life."

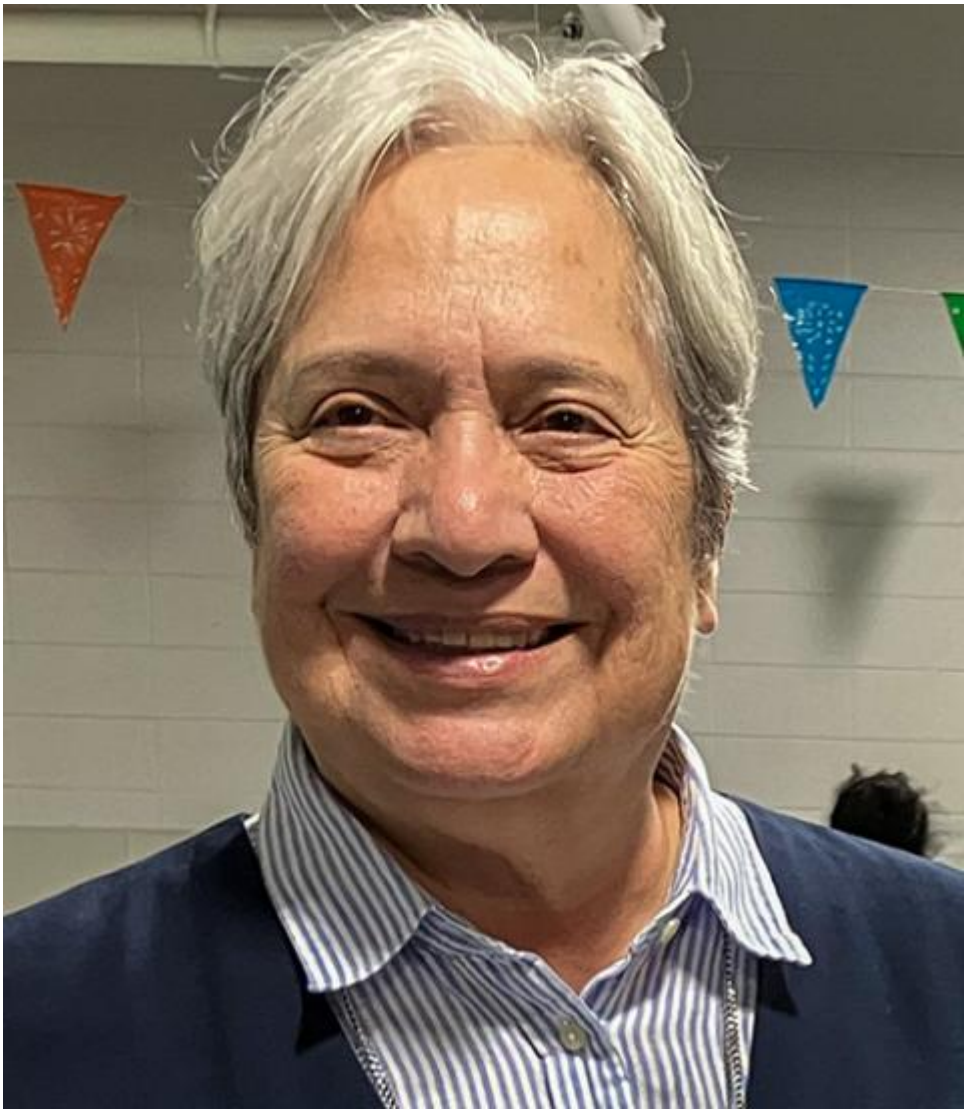
Another congregation, the Notre Dame Sisters of Omaha, added prayers specifically for a Nebraska soldier who was killed, Sgt. 1st Class Noah Tietjens, saying they hold his family, loved ones and community in their prayers.

"We mourn the loss of life that war brings, including the countless civilians and the service members whom we place in harm's way," their March 5 statement said. "We pray for our leaders and people of goodwill everywhere courageously to choose the path of dialogue toward a just peace."

The congregational statements echoed earlier comments made by individual sisters and congregational representatives.

Pimentel named a Time magazine woman of the year

Sr. Norma Pimentel, a longtime champion of migrants and the executive director of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley, has been named one of Time magazine's 16 women of the year.



Missionary of Jesus Sr. Norma Pimentel (OSV News/David Agren)

Pimentel, a member of the Missionaries of Jesus who has been called the late Pope Francis' "favorite nun," was cited for helping "transform the Humanitarian Respite Center in McAllen, Texas, into a place of refuge that has served more than 100,000 migrants, providing them with food, shelter, and essentials like clothing and hygiene products."

The citation noted that with the national crackdown on immigration beginning in 2025, the number of those seeking asylum in the United States dropped "to nearly zero." Rather than closing the facility, Time noted, Pimentel shifted the ministry's focus "to aiding community members who are elderly, hungry, or experiencing homelessness; according to 2024 U.S. Census data, 1 in 5 McAllen residents lives in poverty."

Time also noted that the Department of Homeland Security suspended federal funding for the Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley, alleging that the nonprofit "violated the terms of its government grant by providing services to migrants beyond the federal 45-day limit in past years." In its response, Time said, the Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley "affirmed its commitment to complying with federal grant requirements."

But equally important, Time said, faith groups, nonprofits and local supporters donated enough funds for the organization to continue its work. "In the Valley, somos familia," Pimentel said. "We are family because ... no matter who we are, we come together and we respond together."

The other 15 women chosen come from the fields of sports, business, science and humanitarian advocacy. The selections were announced in Time's March 9 issue.

[GSR National Correspondent Dan Stockman contributed to this report.]