Voices of Sisters
Social Justice



Stained glass windows of Magnificat Chapel at the motherhouse of the Sisters of the Humility of Mary in Villa Maria, Pennsylvania. (Eilis McCulloh)



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Where do we stand?

A little over a year ago, the following quote appeared on my Facebook feed: "Know where you stand and stand there." It is a quote from Jesuit Fr. Daniel Berrigan, who is long known for his anti-war and peace advocacy. I've shared it on Facebook a couple of times, often in a post with light streaming through the stained glass windows in Magnificat Chapel at my community's motherhouse.

For quite some time now, Berrigan's words have accompanied me as I, like so many others, have sat staring at the decay of democracy in the United States and communities torn apart by immigration enforcement.

The constant upheaval of human rights in the United States is often enough to quiet us into disbelief — a stupor of sorts when we cannot face one more ICE watch alert, or one more news conference, or one more cut to the social safety net.

In fact, as I write this, we are waiting to hear about the implementation of *Mullin* v. *Doe*, the Supreme Court case that effectively ended temporary protected status for Haitian and Syrian immigrants. Many of us are waiting with bated breath, tracking the movements of ICE around cities with large Haitian and Syrian populations, and wondering what we can possibly do.

"Know where you stand and stand there."

Berrigan's words again remind me that I know who (and what) I stand for, and I'm called to be present to that. It's about calling attention to what is happening around us. It's about celebrating together and mourning together. It's about bearing witness together.

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For example, last month, I participated in the Corpus Christi Procession for Immigrants in Washington, D.C. that was led by Bishop Evelio Menjivar-Ayala. My parish, St. Camillus, set up an altar with the names of 35 parishioners who had been detained and deported over the last year. The parish also invited participants to carry pictures of some of them. This act of holding a fellow parishioner's picture, of

coming together in prayer and community, is an act of bearing witness to what is happening in our country.

My own congregation, the Sisters of the Humility of Mary, aptly stated this in a recent statement calling attention to the Supreme Court case. We said:

"In the spirit of our Chapter 2025 Response to the Spirit, we recommit ourselves to responding to the critical needs of today's world of chaos, violence, and injustice by advocating for immigrants and others who are poor and vulnerable. In this moment, we hear that call with renewed clarity. The uncertainty, fear, and hardship these decisions bring to immigrant families compel us to stand with them in prayer, solidarity, and action."

Like the Corpus Christi procession, our statement does not change the horrors happening around us. But, it reminds us that we have a commitment to courageously speak the truth about what is happening while remaining in solidarity with all people. Our actions do not need to be two-mile processions or standing on the street corner. What this time calls us is to faithfully remain committed to one another and to live out of that deep belief.

May we continue to know where we stand and have the courage to stand there.