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The Ste. Genevieve County Sheriff's Office and Detention Center March 7, 2026, in Ste. Genevieve, Mo. The facility also serves as an ICE detention center. (OSV News/St. Louis Review/Jacob Wiegand)



by Dan Stockman

[View Author Profile](#)

dstockman@ncronline.org

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The Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, St. Louis Province, are standing with the St. Louis Archdiocese in its lawsuit against U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE, over access to the sacraments for detained Catholics.

The [lawsuit was filed](#) Oct. 5 by the archdiocese; St. Louis Archbishop Mitchell Rozanski; and Fr. Christopher Schroeder, pastor at Christ the King and St. Joseph parishes in University City, Missouri, who makes regular visits to the Ste. Genevieve County Detention Center.

The federal lawsuit alleges restrictions at the detention center prevent Catholic priests from hearing confessions, distributing Communion and celebrating Mass for immigrants detained there. The facility is a county jail that rents space to ICE; about 150 immigrants are held there at a time and the lawsuit says about 3,000 have passed through since mid-2025.

Under the jail's policy, clergy visits take place through a glass partition, with priests and detainees communicating by telephone. Clergy are permitted to visit only during a four-hour period on Mondays, and priests cannot pass religious items through the partition or celebrate Mass.

The sisters' Oct. 7 statement says that in March, they joined a prayer vigil outside the jail.

"For men and women facing the hardest days of their lives, separated from their families, often far from home and uncertain of what comes next, the loss of the sacraments imposes real and immediate harm," the announcement says.

"Access to the sacraments is a matter of religious liberty and human dignity, and it should not end at a jail door."

Sr. Maureen Freeman, on behalf of the congregation's leadership team, said in the press release that the Gospel says a detainee is no different than any other person.

"Our congregation was founded to move always toward love of God and love of neighbor without distinction," Freeman said in the statement. "The dear neighbor in detention is no less our neighbor."

"As our bishops have said to our immigrant families: you are not alone."

Former sister sentenced for abuse

A former Catholic sister, originally from Japan, was sentenced to 20 years in prison after being found guilty of abuse of the children she cared for at a boarding school for the hearing impaired in Argentina.

Kumiko Kosaka was arrested in 2017 after spending a month as a fugitive. She was tried with another sister from the school and seven staffers, and all were acquitted in 2023. But in August of this year, the Supreme Court of Mendoza province overturned her acquittal, leading to a new trial. The Buenos Aires Times [reported](#) the 200-page decision upheld the acquittals of the other sister and seven staffers.

Kosaka, 51, was found guilty of aggravated sexual abuse of four children and three counts of covering up the sexual abuse by priests at the school. The victims were between the ages of 4 and 17. Kosaka proclaimed her innocence throughout the trials; the school was closed in 2016.

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Agence France-Press [reported](#) that the school did not teach the children sign language, making it even more difficult for victims to tell anyone what was happening.

In 2019, priests Horacio Corbacho and Nicola Corradi were each sentenced to more than 40 years in prison for abusing deaf children; Corradi died in 2021. School gardener Armando Gómez was sentenced to 18 years and former altar boy Jorge Bordón to 10 years, the Buenos Aires Times reported.

The Washington Post [reported](#) that Corradi had been accused of abuse at another school for hearing-impaired children in Italy; instead of being punished, he was transferred to Argentina. Both schools were run by a small order of priests called the Company of Mary for the Education of the Deaf. Kosaka's family moved to Argentina in 1977 and she joined religious life in 2000. She lived at the school from 2004 to 2012, and worked at other religious schools, the Post said. She reportedly left religious life when the accusations became public.

In addition to the prison sentence, Kosaka is barred from any activity related to the care, education or guardianship of minors for 10 years, the Record [reported](#), but she remains free while her appeals play out.

Canadian sisters give up hospital

Another congregation of Catholic sisters — this one in Canada — has given up the hospital it founded.

The Sisters of St. Martha founded St. Martha's Regional Hospital in Nova Scotia in 1905; on Oct. 1 the facility — the last Catholic hospital in Nova Scotia — became Antigonish Memorial Regional Hospital, the CBC [reported](#).

Sr. Brendalee Boisvert, the order's superior, said the congregation is down to 49 sisters with an average age of 87. The Marthas had hoped Catholic Health International, a partnership formed by four congregations of Catholic sisters, would take over the hospital, but the government instead put the public health authority, Nova Scotia Health, in charge.

"For some, they say it'll always be St. Martha's," Boisvert told the CBC.

Brett MacDougall, vice president of operations for Nova Scotia Health's eastern zone, said patients won't see immediate changes, nor will the sisters' legacy be forgotten.

"I don't know if the staff, patients, others will feel any other sort of significant change other than the presence of the sisters themselves," MacDougall told the CBC. "Their presence, their support, how they supported staff, has been, you know, really remarkable."