

Response to Ongoing Violence in Chicago | July 2020

Our city and our nation are at a tipping point. COVID-19 is not the only pandemic we face. We, the people who live, work, raise our families, and worship in this city must also acknowledge the pandemics of racism, violence, and fear that have separated us from each other. We, the Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago, see the anguish and pain of our friends and neighbors whose communities have been torn apart by violence of all kinds for far too many years.

Every week our community adds to the tally of loss. By mid-July, the City of Chicago had recorded in 2020 the highest total of annual homicides in nearly a decade. The majority of those killed are young African American men. The collateral damage of murdered children, grieving families, and shattered neighborhoods extends far beyond.

Every faith tradition on the Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago teaches that human life is sacred and that we are responsible for one another. Yet we, too, have failed to instill the truth that when we look into the faces of other people, we are seeing our brothers and our sisters.

We can no longer look away and distance ourselves from the tragedy unfolding around us. Each of us has the responsibility to address the root causes of the problem. Without dignity, safety, and hope, all of us are lost.

We must renew our responsibilities to one another. We must rededicate ourselves to sustained, long-term efforts to invest in all our neighborhoods and support all of our neighbors. And we must rebuild the spaces for hope in our city. In the days, weeks, months, and years ahead, we commit ourselves to work with all those of good will to build the beloved community.