



THE COUNCIL OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS
OF METROPOLITAN CHICAGO

After the Verdict: Guidelines for Area Clergy Responding to the Van Dyke Trial

The Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago represents more than 30 religious communities in our Region. Many are watching the trial of Jason Van Dyke for the death of Laquan McDonald. Like you, we are concerned about the community response to the verdict.

The Council is asking all clergy within our networks as well as across the City of Chicago to join together in supporting community responses to the decision of the jury and asking everyone to oppose violence. To these ends we offer the following suggestions:

Honor the Mother of Laquan McDonald

Tina Hunter, mother of Laquan McDonald, has called for nonviolence following the Van Dyke verdict. Emphasize that those who choose violence are deliberately contradicting her wishes and endangering the community. They are responsible for the consequences of their actions.

Announce that Your Doors Will Be Open after the Verdict

If your congregation has the resources, publicize and announce that you will be a safe place for people to gather and share their thoughts about the verdict. Enable people to express their issues and concerns nonviolently. Encourage planning of nonviolent next steps such as vigils, teach-ins, and forums.

Connect with the Chicago Police Department

Contact your district Commander or local police liaison. Confirm whom you need to contact in case of concerns following the verdict. Ask for their emergency protocol and inform CPD of your congregation's plans. Request and exchange emergency contacts/phone numbers.

Speak Out Unequivocally against Violence

Human life is sacred in every religious tradition. Speak from the pulpit against violent responses to the verdict. Amplify this message through your newsletter, your signage, and your congregation's committees and leadership.

Quash the Rumor Mill

Use the power and connections of your congregation to dispel and counteract rumors following the verdict. Interrupt rumors with facts, time, and counter-narrative.

Work to Build a More Just Chicago

The work of healing and justice in our city will continue after the verdict. Together we can renew our commitment to a Chicago that works for all of us.

For more information contact the Council at 773.595.4012