

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OUTREACH — ARCHDIOCESE of CHICAGO — AWARENESS - SERVICES - PREVENTION



Good News About the Fight to End Domestic Violence

Fall 2022

ACDVO Celebrates 7th Annual Mass for DV Victims



Cheryl Stella, a survivor of domestic violence, gives her testimony during the 7th Annual Domestic Violence Survivors' Mass

For the seventh straight year the Archdiocese of Chicago Domestic Violence Outreach (ACDVO) celebrated a Mass at Holy Name Cathedral for victims, their children and those who cause harm. Fr. Charles W. Dahm, O.P., director of ACDVO, presided and preached at the Mass. His homily, building on the prophet Habakkuk's cry to God to stop the violence, focused on the prevalence of domestic violence, its dynamics, reasons victims stay, the teaching of the Catholic Church and the challenge to all to work for the end of domestic violence and the creation of peace in our homes. Fr. Chuck invited Cheryl Stella (on left) to give her testimony of her liberation from abuse. Her testimony follows.

A Survivor's Testimony Given by Cheryl Stella

When most people hear "domestic abuse," they think of bruises, broken bones and even death. But *emotional* abuse, which silently kills from the inside out, is devastating. That is my story.

As my four children grew up, they began to challenge parental authority; that is when my husband's control, power plays and manipulation began. As years progressed, toxicity in our home got worse. The children struggled to have a meaningful relationship with their dad while he imposed "tough love," demanding "respect" from them. The more he felt he couldn't control them, the more verbally and emotionally abusive he became with both me and the kids.

At the time, I did not recognize this as abuse. It wasn't until his behaviors escalated to grabbing them around the neck and slapping them so hard their heads hit the car window that I realized things were out of control. I recognized that my boys might grow up to treat women in their lives the same way, and my girls might grow up thinking they should be treated as I was. Then I heard Fr. Chuck Dahm speak at my church and my eyes were opened. My journey to get us all away from the abuse had begun.

When my husband pushed me down the stairs, I sought out our parish DV coordinator, Jim Kintz, a retired police officer. I learned so much from him. He was by my side throughout my 3-year divorce, attending every court date with me.

After a while, I started working with the DV ministry at my church and eventually began working with Jim to develop programs for victims, abusers, teens and clergy in other parishes, colleges and schools. I only hope I can help one person better and more quickly answer the question, "Is it normal or is it abuse?"



Members of the Domestic Violence Committee of San Padre Pio parish with Fr. Chuck before Mass at the cathedral.



What's New at ACDVO

ACDVO Recent Activities

In September, Fr. Chuck participated in a workshop at **St. Peter parish in Geneva**, where he supported the excellent ministry of Jim Kintz, a retired police officer, who advances domestic violence ministry in the Rockford diocese.

In September, Fr. Chuck and COO John Monaco gave a class on domestic violence to English-speaking **candidates for the diaconate** that was well received.

In mid-October, Fr. Chuck gave a workshop on domestic violence for **clergy in the Archdiocese of Washington, DC**. In the evening he spoke with Hispanic women working on domestic violence issues, encouraging them about the importance of their ministry and offering them some additional ideas.

In late October, the *National Catholic Reporter* published **Fr. Chuck's article, "The Church needs to improve annulment process for domestic violence victims."** Fr. Chuck offers recommendations for reform of the annulment process and concludes: "Improvement is necessary, partly to better serve petitioners, notably victims of domestic violence, and partly to demonstrate that the Church is faithfully carrying out the compassionate ministry of Jesus Christ."

In early November, Fr. Chuck spoke on domestic violence among Latina women at the **National Catholic Conference of Directors of Hispanic Ministry** in Las Vegas—a great opportunity to raise awareness among staff from different dioceses, most of which have no response to victims of domestic violence.

ACDVO returned to parishes to animate their DV ministries and also preached at and formed ministries at new parishes. Fr. Chuck preached at **St. Paul VI** (formerly Mater Christi) in Riverside, **Our Lady of Mercy, San Padre Pio** (formerly St. Hilary), **Old St. Patrick's, Blessed Juan Acutis** (formerly St. John Birchman) and **St. Damian** in Oak Forest, and Brendan Curran, O.P., preached at all Masses at Holy Innocents and St. Malachy/Precious Blood, now merged in **Blessed Maria Gabriella** parish. All of these parishes have developed strong ministries with support from ACDVO.



ACDVO Implementing CDC Prevention Curriculum in Schools



ACDVO is now implementing the CDC's Dating Matters® (DM) curriculum on healthy relationships in 12 elementary schools – 6 Catholic and 6 public – in metropolitan Chicago for the 2022-2023 school year. The schools are Queen of Angels, St. Agnes of Bohemia, St. Benedict the African, St. Benedict Preparatory, St. Catherine-St. Lucy, and St. Paul of the Cross. The six Chicago public schools, all from the Englewood area, are: Brighton Park, Seward, Henderson, Evers, Green and Kershaw.

Dating Matters® is evidence-based and validated, i.e., effective in reducing violent or abusive behavior. DM is designed for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students, and ACDVO provides training and coaching for teachers and social workers implementing the program. This project will continue until 2025 when all 12 schools will have completed the 3-year sequence. ACDVO anticipates that all archdiocesan and Chicago public schools will incorporate the DM curricula systemwide after the successful pilot. This achievement

would be a major step toward reducing teen dating and domestic violence. ACDVO is working to ensure that DM becomes a recommended curricula for all Illinois schools.

ACDVO has increased its Dating Matters® coaching staff from two to three and expanded its training program from once to twice a year, reinforcing an excellent DM experience for students and teachers. ACDVO's annual budget for the pilot is \$94,000. Do you have questions about Dating Matters®? Contact John Monaco at jmonaco.acdvo@gmail.com.

Raising Awareness



Parishes Organize during Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Parish ministries organized multiple activities during October to raise awareness about the pandemic of domestic violence.



Queen of All Saints parish joined with St. Mary of the Woods and St. Martha to celebrate Mass for victims of domestic violence with Fr. Chuck presiding and preaching. Adele Bach spoke about ACDVO's work to participants.

Adele Bach at Queen of All Saints

St. Hubert's Domestic Violence Ministry



The domestic violence ministry at St. Hubert parish in Hoffman Estates organized a morning workshop which included updates from Fr. Chuck about the activities of ACDVO. The Schaumburg Police reported on their work on domestic violence, and Dating Matters Coach & Prevention Educator, Jessica Bernard, spoke about the importance of addressing teen dating violence. The parish committee was well organized in their striking purple T-shirts, offering food, drinks and tables full of pertinent materials.



St. Paul VI Parish Awareness Banner

At St. Paul VI parish, the pastor invited Mike McGillicuddy from the parish domestic violence ministry to address the congregation: "The sign (above) and purple lights out front of church signal to everyone in our community that we are in solidarity with those who struggle with relationship violence. The purple ribbons handed out before Mass tell everyone that we oppose domestic violence, and we are resolved to protect survivors and their children. *Break the Silence* cards in the pews remind us of our personal responsibility as allies to prevent domestic violence."



Holy Cross parish (Deerfield) held a forum of experts for in-person and online attendees during which they displayed many DV materials.

Holy Cross forum resource table



On Oct 8, **Black Catholic Women Say No to Domestic Violence**, an organization among predominately African American parishes on Chicago's south and west sides, organized a prayer service and walk.

Joining the activity were Catholic Charities, Metropolitan Family Services, Family Rescue, CTS Health Services, University of Illinois Cancer Center, and Rita's Recovery Room. Fr. Paul Whittington, O.P., pastor at St. Katharine Drexel parish, offered a special prayer and remarks were offered by Steven G. Watkins, Judge, Circuit Court of Cook County, Rev. Gwendolyn Moore,

Trinity United Church of Christ, and Mabel Wayne, St. Katharine DV ministry.

Parishioners at St. Katharine Drexel were asked to wear purple at the weekend Masses on October 8th and 9th, and the DV ministry distributed hand sanitizers and face masks after all the Masses.



Assuring a Solid ACDVO Future

Search for a Director

ACDVO seeks a person to serve as its full-time Executive Director starting in spring, 2023. ACDVO's mission is to raise awareness of intimate partner violence, connect victims to services and promote prevention. The new Director must be collaborative, energetic, flexible and possess excellent management, fundraising and communication skills and enjoy working in the community. Outreach to parishes and schools is a principal responsibility. For more information about ACDVO, consult ACDVO's website: www.domesticviolenceoutreach.org.

The Director will be an employee of the Archdiocese of Chicago, operate from home, supervise seven part-time contract staff and work with an Executive Committee in guiding the organization. Fr. Chuck Dahm will continue to support ACDVO with preaching, as well as mentoring the new Director. Applicants should send their resume and questions to Charles W. Dahm, O.P., Executive Director, at cdahm13@gmail.com.

Honoring the Legacy- Building the Future

The Archdiocese of Chicago does not fund ACDVO. We thank you for your donations and urge you to consider one of the following ways to enhance your support. Securing ACDVO's future is critical for upcoming generations. May God continue to bless you. – Fr. Chuck Dahm, O.P.

For a complete list of **Ways to Give** please visit ACDVO's website and select the **Support Us** tab or contact Naomi Gutierrez at 773.895.6674 or ngutierrez.acdvo@gmail.com for additional information or forms. With all giving opportunities, it is important to direct your gift to the **Archdiocese of Chicago Domestic Violence Outreach**.



Online: Online donations are secure and flexible. Choose the amount you wish to give and designate for ACDVO.

Mail: Send a check or credit card donation for ACDVO to Fr. Charles W. Dahm, O.P., 1914 S. Ashland Ave, Chicago, IL 60608.

The following methods are managed by the Archdiocese of Chicago Office of Stewardship and Development:

Stock Gifts: Securities or stock can be given thru electronic transfer or physical transfer of stock certificates.

Qualified Charitable Distribution/IRA Rollover: A "charitable IRA rollover" allows people 70½ or older to have their administrator directly transfer up to \$100,000 annually, tax free, from their IRA account.

Employer Matching Gifts: Ask your employer about specific requirements for matching gifts.

Donor-Advised Funds: A DAF, often administered by a financial services company, allows you to combine the most favorable tax benefits.

Wills and Living Trusts: A charitable bequest in a will or living trust is easy. Simple instructions are available.

ACDVO Benefit Gala - March 19, 2023

ACDVO will host its 6th Annual Benefit Gala on Sunday, March 19, 2023, at 11:00 am at Crystal Sky Banquets, 7941 47th Street, McCook, IL.
Mark your calendar and plan to attend this festive event!

As 2022 ends, please help us with your support. Thank you very much.

Thanks to all who donate so generously to support our ministry. We appreciate anything you might share at this time. We still hope to soon be back to full and normal participation in our parishes and communities. Our work is moving forward; help us reduce if not eliminate domestic violence from our midst. May God bless you with good health, love and peace. Contact Charles W. Dahm, O.P. ACDVO Director, cdahm13@gmail.com, 312-371-7752, 1914 S. Ashland Avenue, Chicago, IL 60608.