

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



Good News About the Fight to End Domestic Violence

Fall 2021

Domestic Violence Spikes during Pandemic

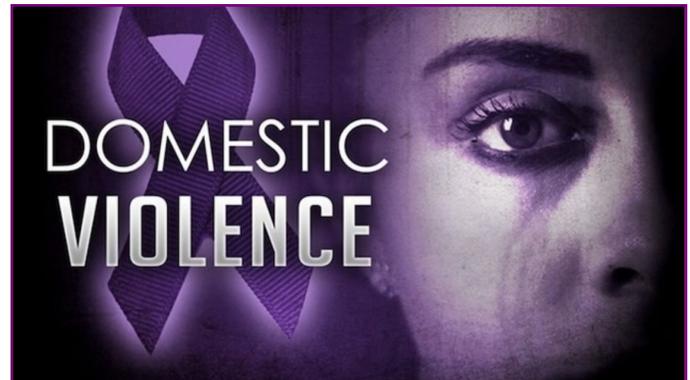
It is not surprising that incidents of domestic violence increased during the Covid-19 pandemic. Victims were more confined and isolated and often less free to make confidential calls for help. Families were under increased stress financially, emotionally and socially, which caused additional strain in families, especially those already in a cycle of violence.

One indicator of this trend was a higher number of calls to domestic violence hotlines. The Illinois DV Hotline received 28,749 calls in 2020, an increase of 16% over calls in 2019. There were 938 text communications in 2020, an increase of 2,738% over 2019. Nearly 80% of callers to the Illinois DV Hotline were persons of color.

The number of 911 calls increased in some police districts and declined in others, probably because victims confined with those causing them harm found telephoning more difficult. There was a shocking 121% rise in homicides related to domestic violence year-over-year. Over 83% of these victims were African Americans. Many family members commented that victims suffered extreme economic hardship because of loss of work and partners who took stimulus checks for themselves.

Conversely, domestic violence services to victims declined for several reasons. Service providers had to administer services virtually, and many victims were not comfortable or capable of communicating online or by phone. Some service providers also became sick, which limited the services they could provide.

Shelters also reduced their number of residents because of social distancing. Some hotels agreed to receive victims, but issues of security and food were serious challenges for providers. In 2020 there were 109 days with no shelter beds available in Chicago and 49 days with no beds available in Illinois. Providers had no choice but to deny shelter to victims; 2,535 adults and 2,158 children were turned away from shelters in Illinois in 2020. *Data from [The Network: Advocating Against Domestic Violence](#).*



Mass for Victims at Cathedral



ACDVO celebrated the 6th Annual Domestic Violence Survivors' Mass at Holy Name Cathedral. Fr. Chuck Dahm presided and preached a homily which included testimonies from two survivors. A video of the homily is available on the [ACDVO website](#).

Advances in Prevention

During the 2021-22 school year, ACDVO is piloting the [Dating Matters®](#) curriculum developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in four Chicago-area schools: St. Agnes of Bohemia, Chicago; St. Francis Xavier, La Grange; St. Catherine-St. Lucy, Oak Park; and St. Malachy, Chicago.

The pilot schools are culturally and socio-economically diverse. According to the CDC, Dating Matters® is proven effective not only in reducing teen dating violence but in reducing levels of bullying, cyber-bullying, physical violence, weapon-carrying, alcohol and substance use, delinquency, sexual violence, and sexual harassment.

For more information or to apply for your school to participate in this pilot curriculum, contact John Monaco at jmonaco.acdvo@gmail.com.



ACDVO Spreading the Word Beyond Chicago



ACDVO is increasingly being recognized for its unique and trailblazing ministry on domestic violence. In the past month, Fr. Chuck Dahm spoke at the Pastoral Center in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City and at the Oklahoma statewide conference on gender-based violence. He topped off his visit preaching in Spanish at a parish that invited him back next spring to form a parish DV ministry. He also received an invitation to keynote the annual Convocation of Deacons there in the spring of 2022.

Fr. Chuck led a day-long session at the First Congress on Hispanic Family and Marriage in the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana. He also preached at all weekend Masses and formed a ministry at St. Mary Parish in Menominee Falls, WI. In the spring, Fr. Chuck taught a class on DV ministry for the ordination class of seminarians from different dioceses at Mundelein Seminary. It is important to note that in each case, the invitation to ACDVO originated from a woman who understands the nature and prevalence of domestic violence and convinced male authorities to invite Fr. Chuck and consider promoting the ministry to victims of domestic violence.

Survivor Champions DV Ministry

Lisa Carrasco is the Coordinator of Hispanic Marriage and Family Life Ministry for the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, OK. She has invited Fr. Chuck to speak in her diocese twice, as well as at a statewide conference on gender-based violence.

Lisa is a valiant woman completely dedicated to the Gospel through service to Hispanic couples and families. She is a survivor of domestic violence and child abuse passed down through several generations of her family.

When she began working with Hispanic families in the archdiocese in 1997, Lisa recognized that the abuse she had experienced was occurring in many other families and wanted women to understand its dynamics and learn how to free themselves from it. She knew that sharing her story of struggle would give them courage.

Lisa developed a module on domestic violence for her marriage preparation classes. As couples examined their history in the Family Origin unit, many recognized they too were or are being affected by abuse. Helping couples discover the abuse in their families convinced Lisa to continue telling her own story. When the Priests' Council asked her to speak, she shared her personal history, which helped many priests better understand the dynamics of domestic violence and how to recognize and respond to it. In her classes she quotes the beautiful pastoral letter of her own Archbishop Eusebius Beltran, *Raising Our Voices in Opposition to Domestic Violence*, together with the U.S. Bishops' letter, *When I Call for Help*.

Together with Catholic Charities, Lisa offers training to parish staffs, and she has partnered with the Oklahoma Attorney General's Office for 15 years to provide the faith track in a statewide conference on gender-based violence. Of course, Lisa receives calls from victims, sometimes referred by clergy, for whom she provides support and referrals for professional help.

Congratulations and many thanks to Lisa Carrasco, a courageous and prophetic witness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.



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Parishes Take Action for DV Awareness Month

In October, parishes with established domestic violence ministries conducted activities to raise awareness about domestic violence. Breaking the silence is one key to helping victims feel supported and able to free themselves from abuse. Some parish DV ministry committees were inactive during Covid-19, but many kept their DV messaging alive and well.

- St. Christine, St. John Fisher and St. Cajetan organized a forum on domestic violence, featuring Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart, their local police commander, a domestic violence agency CEO and Fr. Chuck.
- Committee members from St. Padre Pio, the merger of St. Hilary and Transfiguration parishes, dressed in purple T-shirts emblazoned with DV messages, greeted Mass-goers, distributed literature, and also presented a Prayer of the Faithful dedicated to domestic violence awareness at all Masses each weekend in October.
- Catholic Charities offered seven sessions on different topics for survivors interested in a support group.
- Queen of All Saints, St. Mary of the Woods and St. Martha hosted speaker Shelley Welch from WINGS and sponsored an online collection of items needed for WINGS shelters.
- St. Norbert's Silent No More Committee organized preaching on domestic violence by Deacon Peery Duderstadt on the weekend of October 2-3, provided a resource table in back of church, and displayed a banner on domestic violence in downtown Northbrook.
- St. Raymond of Penafort hung a DV banner on the parking lot fence as well as purple ribbons on 24 trees around the church.
- St. Benedict and Queen of the Apostles published a bulletin article (both virtual and hard copy) on domestic violence and collected winter clothing for children at the Good Shepherd DV shelter.
- St. Robert Bellarmine and St. Constance held an open house for those interested in joining the DV ministry and published articles in the bulletin each weekend.
- St. Theresa (Palatine) and St. Mary of Vernon had preaching on domestic violence at all Masses one October weekend.
- Ascension displayed a banner on the front lawn and purple ribbons on the parking lot fence, offered a DV-focused Prayer of the Faithful each Sunday and organized a collection of personal care items for victims at Sarah's Inn.
- St. Bernadette held a candlelight prayer vigil for victims on the church steps and then an awareness walk through the neighborhood.



St. Norbert parish DV ministry hung a banner in downtown Northbrook park through October



St. Padre Pio parish ministry team greeted parishioners at all weekend Masses with DV materials and wearing awareness T-shirts

ACDVO Posters Available for Your Parish - Contact [Jan Burdulis](#)

(Partial representations)

No one should live with domestic violence.
You can make a difference.



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What's New with ACDVO

ACDVO Launches New Organization

Priests and Deacons Against Domestic Violence (PDDV), a new group started by ACDVO leaders, includes Catholic priests and deacons who work against domestic violence by raising awareness, promoting pastoral service to victims and their children and increasing the response of the Catholic Church. Goals for members of the group are to do the following:

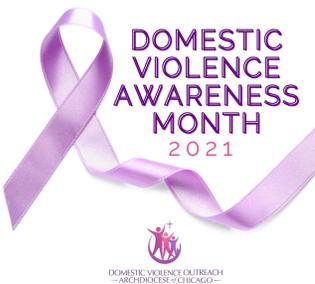
- Understand the dynamics of domestic violence through training and studying the USCCB pastoral letter, *When I Call for Help*.
- Commit to working against domestic violence in their area of ministry, whatever it may be.
- Preach about domestic violence once a year and include DV references in other sermons.
- Encourage other clergy to speak out and advocate against domestic violence.
- Work to get the Catholic Church to be more active in opposing domestic violence.
- Once a year share the work you have done on domestic violence with PDDV.
- Receive periodic reports about what clergy are doing in their work against domestic violence.
- Agree to having your name published as part of PDDV.



Sign up by sending your full name and contact information (phone, address, email, title) to Charles W. Dahm, O.P., Director, Archdiocese of Chicago Domestic Violence Outreach, cdahm13@gmail.com.

Celebrating 40 Years

Awareness Services Prevention



In 1981, the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (www.ncadv.org) designated the first-ever Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM). The focus has always been to connect advocates who are fighting to end domestic violence. Social media has magnified the dynamics of this mission by connecting organizations across the country and world. DVAM's 2021 theme was *#Every1KnowsSome1*, stressing that

no matter the socio-economic, cultural, religious, or racial background, DV is a pandemic that affects all communities.

ACDVO promoted DVAM on social media with content spotlighting area DV organizations and a weekly call to action encouraging followers to get involved in their communities. Popular content on Myths vs Facts, Sunday prayers, and inspirational words from survivors also highlighted the digital campaign. Check out the entire 31-day collection on Facebook ([@domesticviolenceoutreach](https://www.facebook.com/domesticviolenceoutreach)), Instagram ([@dvouchicago](https://www.instagram.com/dvouchicago)) and Twitter ([@dvouchicago](https://twitter.com/dvouchicago)).   

Resources of Faith



To assist survivors of domestic violence in their search for healing resources based on their faith, ACDVO has developed an 18-page pamphlet entitled "You Are Not Alone; God Is with You" in Spanish and English, available free from ACDVO. Pick it up at no cost; \$4.00 fee if you choose to have it mailed.

Two workbooks with much more detail are available from Amazon: [Not Alone: A Christ-Centered Process of Recovery for Women Who Have Experienced Physical, Emotional or Sexual Trauma](#) (\$15) and [Oasis Bible Study](#) (two volumes, \$20 each).

5th Annual Gala Benefit - Save the Date

ACDVO's 5th Annual Gala Benefit will be held Sunday, March 20, 2022, 11:00 am to 2:00 pm at Crystal Sky Banquets, 7941 W. 47th Street, McCook, IL (SW corner of 47th St. and Joliet Road, convenient to highway exits). Brunch will be served, along with raffles and presentations of ACDVO activities. The Gala will also celebrate Fr. Chuck's 85th Birthday.

Thank You So Much for Your Generous Support

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.