

## Urban Dolorosa: A Sorrowing City Stands

Hyde Park Union Church in Chicago is concerned for the victims of urban violence in their city. More importantly, they are acting to address the issue. They have taken the lead in creating *Urban Dolorosa* to act redemptively in Chicago.

The statistics are frightening. Over 175 children were murdered in the city of Chicago in a two-year period ending in August 2010; fifteen times that number were seriously injured. As many as 1 in 4 youth in some communities have witnessed a person being shot or killed. The loss of a child is devastating. The loss of urban childhood itself is overwhelming.



Evidence has shown that a community-wide response of compassionate support and collective concern saves children's lives and contributes to their long-term mental and physical health. Only when communities unite to support youth and families to promote peacemaking and long-term change will children be less vulnerable to violence and more resilient in the face of it. The religious communities of Chicago are essential to this collective response. *Urban Dolorosa* seeks to lift up current anti-violence efforts and to galvanize a more united and sustained public response so that together they can promote peace in their city.

Pastoral volunteers, working in pairs, are being asked to commit seven hours a month over the next year to work at bridging the gaps between neighborhoods in Chicago. They will visit schools, churches, block clubs and families to build relationships, increase understanding, and provide support for those who need it. Training is being provided to assist these volunteers in their work.

Then, on All Soul's Day in 2011, a multi-media event will be premiered in four locations around the city, radically reframing and blending the 13th century Christian hymn *Stabat Mater Dolorosa* (The Grieving Mother Stood) with neighborhood photography, youth performers, original music, and the reading of the names of those who have died.

Finally, in its second year, *Urban Dolorosa* will diversify into advocacy, action, and partnerships (among churches, civic groups, social service agencies, and others) in a more sustained and deeply engaged effort to address the root causes of urban violence.

For more information about this powerful ministry, please go to [www.urbandolorosa.org](http://www.urbandolorosa.org).

### URBAN DOLOROSA: A SORROWING CITY STANDS

#### *Our Vision is:*

- to memorialize Chicago's murdered children,
- to minister to families and youth alongside communities affected by violence,
  - to galvanize the religious communities of Chicago,
- to promote peace-making through sacred music and the arts, and
  - to awaken a more committed public response.