

Happy Monday to all,

On July 21, 1962, a peaceful nighttime civil rights protest in Albany, Georgia resulted in the arrest of 160 activists. This event was part of the broader Civil Rights Movement, highlighting the intense racial tensions and systematic oppression in the Southern United States during the early 1960s. The mass arrest underscored the challenges faced by African Americans in their struggle for equal rights and social justice.

In the United States, the right to peaceful protest is a fundamental right protected by the First Amendment of the Constitution. This right encompasses the freedom to assemble, speak out, and petition the government without fear of reprisal. While the government can impose reasonable "time, place, and manner" restrictions on protests, it cannot suppress the content of the speech or discriminate against particular viewpoints.

Catholic Social Teaching (CST) recognizes the right and even the duty of individuals and groups to advocate for social justice and peaceful change. This includes the possibility of participating in peaceful protests, especially when traditional methods of dialogue have proven ineffective in addressing serious injustices. CST principles like human dignity, the common good, solidarity, and the option for the poor guide this action. However, participants in protests must use careful discernment and adhere to all applicable laws. Today, 63 years after the mass arrests in Albany, the struggle to engage safely in peaceful protest remains challenging. For example, since June 7, the Los Angeles Police Department alone has made 561 arrests related to immigration-related protests, according to the department.

Organizing and political participation are freedoms afforded to all who *reside* in the U.S., including immigrants. However, immigrants, including undocumented immigrants, may face additional risks from any encounter with law enforcement, because any police interaction, even if it doesn't result in a criminal charge or arrest, could lead to deportation.

The federal administration expressed an intent to increase daily deportations. Unfortunately, such statements of intent alone can result in division and fear among communities. As an agency built upon a foundation of Catholic Social Teaching, adherent to scriptural guidance in matters of charity and justice, Catholic Charities remains firmly committed to providing appropriate services and resources to our clients. Our mission calls us to decrease the anxiety and suffering of our brothers and sisters by educating, assisting, empowering and uplifting our clients and our global community.

Our Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) accredited staff provide compassionate guidance and assistance in navigating the complexities of the immigration process. With extensive knowledge, and in partnership with reputable immigration law organizations, our staff is ready to assist individuals in understanding their rights, learning how to report activities that threaten community safety, and planning for potential actions that could be executed on them or their families at any time. Anyone interested in attending a "Know Your Rights" presentation from

our expert staff, or those with general questions on resources and services offered through Catholic Charities, can call [209-444-5900](tel:209-444-5900).

Blessings,

Deacon Mike