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Restorative Justice Offers Healing and Empowerment for Victims of Crime

Sacramento, CA – A new video from the California Catholic Conference (CCC) shows people coming together across the state to address the needs of victims and their families, reduce crime, and provide offenders with an appropriate way to make amends. The actions and programs in the video are based on the principles of restorative justice. During National Crime Victims’ Rights Week, April 19-25, the video will receive wide distribution.

Restorative justice is a response to crime and violence that shifts the focus from punishment to responsibility, rehabilitation and restoration. It addresses the needs of *everyone* impacted by crime—victims, offenders, families, communities, and those who work in the criminal justice system. “Restorative justice is really about reaching out to everyone with the merciful love of our God,” says the Most Reverend Richard Garcia, bishop of Monterey and co-chair of the restorative justice committee for the California Catholic Conference.

Nine Catholic dioceses and the CCC have received a two-year, \$1 million grant from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) to expand local and statewide restorative justice efforts. Each diocese receives a portion of the grant to address needs identified by people living in their communities. Activities range from support for families of murder victims, to ceasefire walks in at-risk neighborhoods, to victim-offender mediation programs. Concrete change is happening, and the video tells the story.

In the Diocese of Oakland, parish leaders from St. Mark and St. Cornelius are joining with other community and faith leaders to respond to the violence in North Richmond. The project is a collaboration of Catholic Charities of the East Bay (CCEB), CCISCO and the Diocese of Oakland. CCEB is providing restorative healing circles for youth and families at St. Mark and CCISCO is organizing weekly Ceasefire Night Walks.

CCC is the official voice of the Catholic community in California's public policy arena. CCHD is the national anti-poverty program of the U.S. Catholic Bishops. CCHD works to break the cycle of poverty by helping low-income people participate in decisions that affect their lives, families and communities.

For more information about local restorative justice success stories in Diocese of Oakland, contact John Watkins at 510-267-8379 or email jwatkins@oakdiocese.org

Watch the video at: www.restorejustice.com

