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Seattle group plans \"flower march\" in support of Catholic sisters

by Alice Popovici

Organizers of the Seattle-based grassroots movement *I Stand with the Sisters* have announced a march in solidarity with Catholic nuns on Aug. 12, and they're encouraging attendees to bring flowers representing sisters who have inspired them. The group will head out from Seattle's Louisa Boren Outlook Park at 12:30 p.m. and arrive at St. James Cathedral by 2 p.m. Here is the announcement:

Bring your family and friends and join us for a fun, festive, and symbolic march to support U.S. Catholic sisters. The LCWR's annual assembly meets in St. Louis in early August and we want to stand in solidarity with the sisters as they discuss their response to the Vatican's mandate for reform.

Why is this symbolic march important?

We hope to draw a large crowd to attest to the values the sisters stand for, which we stand for as well: Faithful witness to the message of Jesus for compassion, inclusion, and respect for all people; dialogue and collaboration between the bishops and the laity; the right to speak, follow our consciences, and continue to implement the values and teaching of Vatican II. This march is about the sisters--because Rome's action against them seems unfair and misguided. But, it's also about us-- ordinary Catholics--standing strong for the kind of church we want in the future.

What do I need to do to participate?

Just show up ~ with lots of people, if you can bring them! The larger the crowd, the greater the possibility of press coverage, which also helps to get our message out. The march will be inclusive and ecumenical. People of all races, shapes, and sizes--anyone who's interested and who shares our values is welcome. We're encouraging people to bring flowers representing the sisters who have

formed, educated, and helped us over the years. The flowers will be left at St. James Cathedral. You can also make signs (no higher than 18?) and banners of support. Bring balloons (also no higher than 18?), your voices, and your enthusiasm. Wear your *I Stand with the Sisters* button! We'll have a police escort and march south on 15th Avenue E on Capitol Hill, ending up at St. James. This outing has an important purpose, and will be a delightful way to spend part of a summer Sunday afternoon.

How long is the march?

The distance of the march is 2.4 miles. If that feels too long or too far for you or members of your group, we're allowed to have one trailing vehicle (a bus for 15); you can also meet us at St. James Cathedral or join us along the way. It's difficult to know how long it may take to cover that distance, which will depend on the size of the crowd and the pace of walking. We plan to start walking from Louisa Boren Outlook Park at 12:30 PM. So, we should be at St. James around 1:30 or 2:00 PM.

Where is Louisa Boren Outlook Park?

Louisa Boren is a small park on the NE corner of 15th Avenue East and E. Garfield Street in Capitol Hill. It is 1 block north of Volunteer Park and directly across the street from Lakeview Cemetery. (Lakeview is perhaps best known as the place that Bruce and Brandon Lee are buried, for you martial arts movie fans.) A green hedge borders the park along the sidewalk that separates it from busy traffic on 15th Avenue E. You've probably driven by the park many times without even knowing it's there. It's quite charming, and overlooks Lake Washington. Look for people with signs and banners and join us as we assemble.

Where can I park?

Some on-street parking is available in the neighborhood but we suggest you bus, carpool, or have someone drop you off. If you decide to drive, we have received permission from St. Mark's Cathedral to park in their lot as well.

Can I help in other ways? Yes! Share this flyer with friends; email it to your contacts. ?Like? us on Facebook and post the march on your own Facebook page. Publicize the march even if you can't make it! Donations to the button fund will also be welcome.

The movement began in April as a group of women gathered to share their sadness and anger over the Vatican's critical assessment of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. Read about their mission here.

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