Torture Survivors and Their Supporters Speak Out in Louisville:
Ursuline Sisters Host Event During Torture Awareness Month

LOUISVILLE, Ky (June 19, 2009) – 20 years after Kentucky Sister Dianna Ortiz was abducted and tortured in Guatemala, other survivors and supporters of abolishing the use of torture will come together in Louisville. Next week, local organizations, along with hundreds more across the country, will mark Torture Abolition Week with a series of events and public actions.

Sister Ortiz is a Maple Mount Ursuline who used her faith to turn her horrifying experiences into a way to help others. She founded Torture Abolition and Survivors' Support Coalition (TASSC) and has worked to abolish the use of torture while helping other survivors cope. Religious and human rights groups like TASSC designated June Torture Awareness Month. The Ursuline Sisters of Louisville are among those hosting events in Louisville in support of raising awareness and abolishing the practice.

On Thursday, June 25th, the Ursuline Sisters will host a free screening of the film ***"Breaking the Silence."*** This hour long film was created with members of TASSC, including Sister Ortiz, as well as other survivors of torture from the United States and around the world. Throughout the film, survivors recount both their torture and the emotional healing begun through TASSC. The screening will be followed by a discussion . The screening begins at 7pm and will take place at Brescia Hall located at 3105 Lexington Road on the Ursuline Campus.

Friday, June 26 is United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. As part of this important day, a public witness will be held at **6th and Broadway from Noon until 1pm,** during a continuing vigil focused on peace between Palestinians and Israelis. This event was inspired by Israel's "Women in Black" and has been organized locally by the Louisville Committee for Israeli and Palestinian States.

On Saturday, June 27th there will be vigil at the corner of Grinstead and Lexington Road from 11am until 1pm. Organization representatives and a local survivor of torture will make statements **for the press at noon at the same location.** Marcy Allman, organizer for the local events, said "My heart breaks to hear the stories of these atrocities, and to know that many are committed in my name, with my taxes. That is hard to live with." All events in Louisville will focus on action, education and vigilance.

The sponsors of these events include the Ursuline Sisters of Louisville, Kentucky Interfaith Taskforce on Latin America and the Caribbean, Louisville Committee for Peace in the Middle East, Louisville Peace Action Community, Louisville Committee for Israeli/Palestinian States, Fellowship of Reconciliation Louisville Chapter, and
St. William Peacemaking Community, United Nations Association – Louisville.