CMSM Response to Potential Attacks on Syria

Silver Spring, MD (September 6, 2013). The Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) recognizes the incredible challenge of the present moment in Syria in the midst of this ongoing tragedy. CMSM has produced a statement “Interrupting Hostilities and Authentic Accountability in Syria.”

Recently President Obama made a decision for military strikes in Syria and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee just passed a resolution for military action with a statement of policy to “change the momentum on the battlefield.” Pope Francis, the US Catholic Conference of Bishops, many faith groups and theological ethicists have spoken out against military strikes and proposed constructive alternatives. CMSM’s President Very Rev. John Edmunds, ST, explains that, “we see a great opportunity for the U.S. to interrupt the interactions of hostility by taking the initiative to recognize that authentic accountability is primarily about increasing understanding and addressing resulting harms to relationships; encouraging more empathy for those who’ve suffered and taking of responsibility for harm, and ensuring restitution. This is not a choice between military action and "doing nothing," a frame which again is being used to legitimate violence.”

“Rather than deterring behavior or bringing an end to the violence that has already cost more than 100,000 lives, U.S. military strikes threaten to widen the vicious civil war in Syria, undermine prospects to de-escalate the violence, eventually reach a just negotiated settlement, and ensure authentic accountability.”

The CMSM statement goes on to elaborate why such an increase in violence will likely undermine political negotiations with some supporting research on the dynamics of violent revolutions. The statement then turns to some alternative options such as: a diplomatic and legal focus, restorative justice processes, utilizing peace forces, and participating in the Pope’s call for prayer and fasting on Saturday Sept. 7th.

For those concerned about U.S. credibility, this statement offers a way to re-think such credibility based on diplomatic leadership and a more authentic accountability that better serves to prevent future chemical weapons and violence.

The full statement can be found at this link.