



**Statement before sentencing of Dominican sisters
who protested at missile silo**

July 18, 2003

"The three religious women found guilty April 7 of vandalizing a nuclear missile site in northeastern Colorado acted out of heartfelt personal conviction. Their actions were symbolic and resulted in no significant damage. They were clearly motivated by their sincere hope for lasting peace in our world.

"The sisters' opinions and actions do not completely reflect the teachings of the Church. Pope John Paul II once observed that nuclear deterrence is morally acceptable 'certainly not as an end in itself but as a step on the way toward a progressive disarmament.' The bishops of the United States said much the same in their 1983 pastoral letter, *The Challenge of Peace*. In the case of the U.S. nuclear deterrent, it is entirely appropriate for Catholics to obey the law and respect military property.

"I have confidence in our courts. I hope that their July 25 sentencing will reflect common sense and take into account the good intentions of the sisters."