

# Why 16 Days of Peace?

On November 25<sup>th</sup> 1960 in the Dominican Republic, three sisters, Patricia, Minerva and Maria Teresa were brutally beaten and strangled to death. The Mirabel sisters were a symbol of resistance against the dictatorship of the day. It was on their way to visit their husbands, imprisoned for their participation in the resistance movement, that their violent murders occurred.

Every year, their death, and violence against women worldwide, is remembered on this day, now marked as the *United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women*.

Since 1991, the 25<sup>th</sup> of November has also marked the beginning of the international campaign *16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence*. The campaign lasts until 10<sup>th</sup> December, the *International Human Rights Day*, as a sign of the fact that violence against women is a violation of human rights. It also includes *World AIDS Day* on 1<sup>st</sup> December and December 6<sup>th</sup> which marks the anniversary of the Montreal Massacre where a man gunned down 14 women engineering students.

The campaign *On the Wings of a Dove* will fall in the same period 25 November - 10 December 2004 to mark the churches commitment to overcome violence against women and children.



Decade to Overcome Violence  
2001-2010

## Overcoming Violence Against Women and Children

The WCC *Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV) 2001-2010*, offers a creative framework for the churches to focus on overcoming violence against women and children.

- \* Women everywhere have broken their silence to tell their stories, share their suffering, and declare their right to live with safety, dignity, respect and love.
- \* The *Living Letters* report of the *Decade of the Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988-1998)* on visits to most of the WCC member churches observed: "*We are convinced that violence against women is not only being more openly reported... but it is also escalating.*"
- \* Women have spoken out with courage and have called the global Christian community to account.
- \* This is not just a 'women's issue'. It threatens the very being and witness of the churches and must be an urgent concern for the whole Christian community.

**World Council of Churches**  
P.O. Box 2100, CH-1211 Geneva 2  
<http://www.wcc-coe.org>

*On the Wings of a Dove*

A worldwide campaign on  
**Overcoming Violence  
against women  
and children**

25 November - 10 December 2004