As a Jesuit University, following our Catholic values, I often am reminded of how important our role is in creating a more just world.

One of the strongest ways of promoting a humane and just world is through education. And since we are a Jesuit institution, we are aligned with not only the other 27 Jesuit Catholic institutions within the borders of the United States but with nearly 200 Jesuit-sponsored institutions across the globe.

One of the great things about this kinship, this mission to provide education and knowledge to students, is the charge to meet and help people in need. We are part of a network of schools across the world where social justice is integral to our actions.

Now, more than ever, our sister school, the University of Central America (UCA) in Managua, Nicaragua, needs our help.

The social unrest there is not recent. For more than a month protestors, including many college students from the UCA, have picketed for human rights. By recent accounts at least 100 people have died in the violence that has ensued.

Violence in the streets has not abated and a crisis is at hand. At its most basic level, what is happening in Nicaragua is a tragedy and a travesty. This is the largest act of civil unrest since Nicaragua's civil war nearly 30 years ago.

Leaders in the Catholic Church in Nicaragua have attempted to mediate an end to the violence. So far, that mediation has been unsuccessful. Hundreds of thousands of individuals attended a protest on May 30, which was Nicaragua’s Mother’s Day. At least 15 died when police fired upon demonstrators. That rally was to honor the mothers of students previously killed in earlier protests. Now, more mourn these recent tragic deaths.

As a people of faith, believers of the human spirit and advocates of social justice, we at Regis University support the protestors who seek greater democratic freedoms. We support the work of our Church in its mediations. We are extremely proud of the efforts of the UCA students, faculty and their families. Standing up for what is right is sometimes very difficult, sometimes dangerous. During desperate times like this, it also is necessary.

Pope Francis appealed for peace in his Sunday address on June 3 and expressed his "deep sorrow" for the many deaths and injuries. People of faith everywhere join him in his prayers and sorrow.
As a Jesuit institution in solidarity with other Jesuit institutions, we are leaders in social justice and freedom of thought. So we stand in solidarity with our family in Nicaragua. We pray for a quick and peaceful resolution.

For more information about the strife in Nicaragua, visit the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities' website at www.ajcunet.edu/nicaragua.

Gratefully,

John P. Fitzgibbons, S.J.
President