

SCNYC Preparedness Protocol: ICE Arrests & Street Detentions

SCNYC chaplains are **not agents of law enforcement and do not interfere with ICE operations, DEA, DHS, or any federal agency**. Our role is purely civilian and relational. However, ICE public arrests often create intense fear, confusion, and bystander panic — especially when detentions appear forceful or chaotic. In those moments, Street Chaplains can function as *stabilizers* for the surrounding public.

Primary rule: Chaplains do not intervene in, disrupt, or obstruct federal enforcement activity.

The priority is safety, clarity, and containment of public emotional escalation.

SCNYC Role in an ICE-Detention Environment

If ICE is executing a detention or arrest	SCNYC Response
Officers are in active enforcement	Chaplains maintain distance, observe, do not interact with agents or subjects.
Bystanders are distressed, frightened, shouting, or confused	Chaplains engage <i>bystanders only</i> , offering calm presence, explanation, grounding statements.
Someone is crying, panicked, or in shock	Chaplains may offer emotional stabilization: “You are safe right now. Breathe with me.”
A family member or loved one is present	Chaplains may speak quietly with them afterward — never during interference — helping them orient and find legal/support resources.
ICE requests perimeter clearance or disengagement	Chaplains step back immediately; safety and non-obstruction are absolute.

What Chaplains *Can Say* On-Scene

(In professional, neutral, helpful tones)

“This is a law-enforcement action. I cannot interfere, but I am here with you.”

“Breathe with me. You are not alone in this moment.”

“When this clears, I can help you find information or legal resources.”

“Let’s move to the sidewalk so you can stay safe and steady.”

No slogans, no political messaging, no legal advice, no filming unless legally protected and fully safe — SCNYC is not a protest organization.

Post-Incident Contact & Support Options

After detentions conclude and the scene is stable, chaplains may:

- speak with affected family members or witnesses,
- sit with individuals who are shaken or distressed,
- offer grounding presence and — if specifically requested — prayer,
- distribute a list of city legal-aid and immigration defense resources,
- help people locate loved ones or determine next steps calmly,
- notify DCS or DHS outreach teams if secondary needs exist (housing, trauma support, minors present, etc.).

ICE does not need to authorize this activity — chaplains address the **community response, not the enforcement action**.

When Chaplains Must Not Engage

- Attempting to intervene with ICE agents
- Standing between officers and subjects
- Encouraging flight or resistance
- Providing legal counsel
- Filming in a way that obstructs movement
- Escalating tension verbally or physically
- Giving political commentary on immigration policy

SCNYC maintains neutrality, presence, and stability — not advocacy or interference.

Why SCNYC Is Useful in These Situations

ICE detentions often ripple outward beyond the arrest itself. Even when lawful, they generate:

- panic, shouting, confusion
- secondary emotional trauma for children/family
- bystander fear
- community mistrust of all uniformed presence

Street Chaplains reduce the *aftershock* — the emotional and social tremors that remain **after ICE leaves the block**.

Their presence can prevent:

- retaliatory crowd behavior,
- trauma-based rumor escalation,
- long-term distrust of NYPD who may be present but not directing the action.

By stabilizing civilians *around* the event, SCNYC protects the emotional safety of the city even when the original event is federal and outside municipal control.