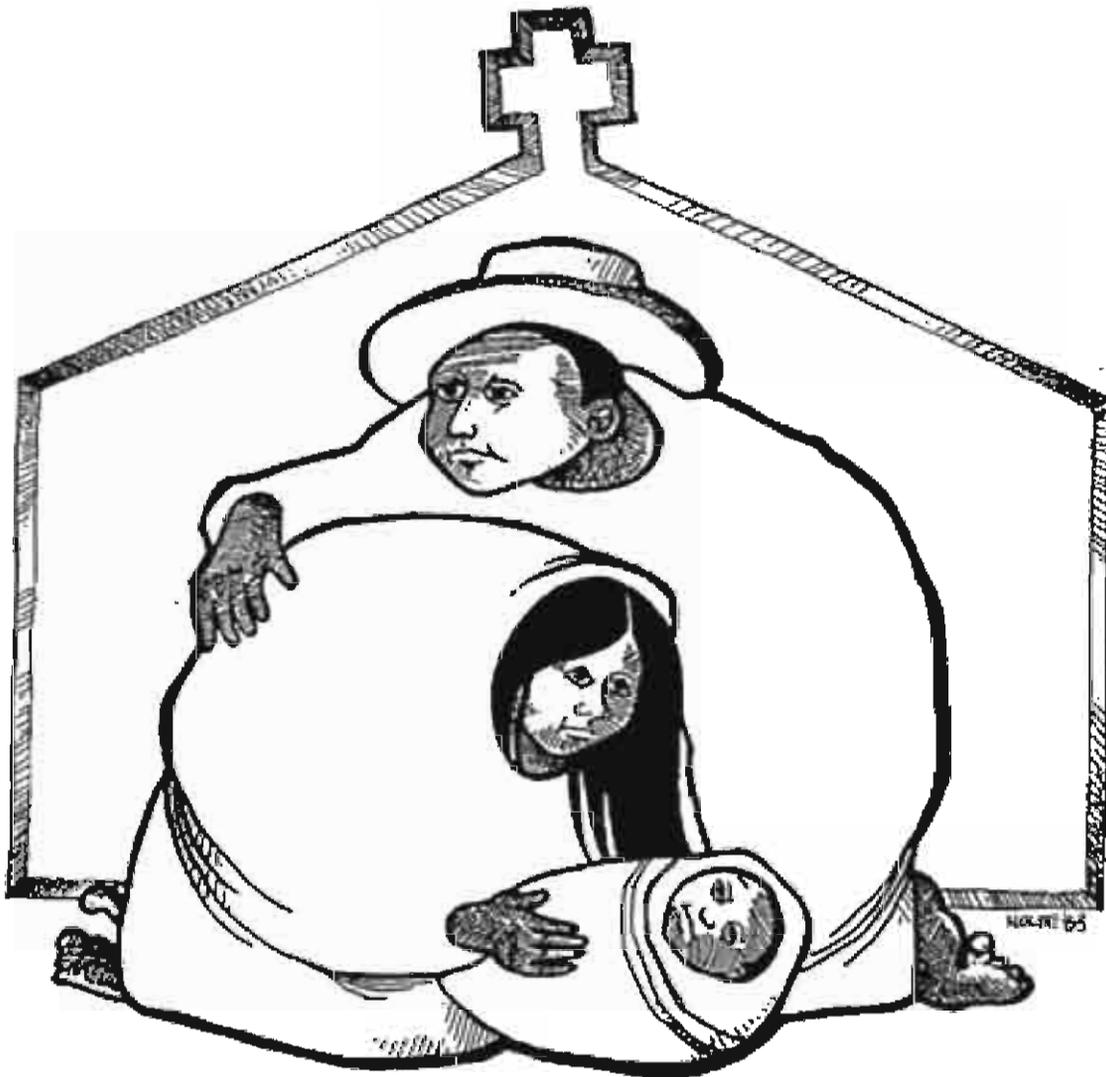


The Round Table

SUMMER
1983

"...a path from where we are to where we should be." --- Peter Maurin



VOICES FROM CENTRAL AMERICA

WHY THIS ISSUE ?

There certainly is a lot available on Central America these days. You may wonder why we dare burden you with more. It is only that we find it irresistible -- compelling, necessary. Many of these articles tell of someone's personal experience of the Central American reality. It is these voices, urging us to respond, that we find so overpowering. We beg you to listen once again, to question once again, to search your own heart once again for a response. These neighbors of ours are so near. They are within reach. The centerpage deals directly with the possibility of response through sanctuary -- opening our homes and churches as places of protection for refugees. That response has begun in St. Louis. We can use your help == call Mary at Karen House (621-4052) or Virginia at Cass House (621-3085).

EL SALVADOR

PERIODICALS

EL SALVADOR BULLETIN. In-depth update and analysis of El Salvador and the region, well documented, excellent resource for solidarity activists. Monthly \$10 yr. 10 or more \$40 - 45; postage. U.S. El Salvador Research & Information Center, Box 4797, Berkeley, CA 94704

BULLETIN OF THE WORLD FRONT IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE OF EL SALVADOR. Information on international El Salvador solidarity and on the World Front. \$50 bi-monthly. From CISPES. Spanish only.

FOR SOLIDARITY BULLETIN. Bi-weekly news and information from El Salvador and notes on solidarity developments. \$25. FOR Solidarity Information Office, Box 2793 NY NY 10116

CISPES MONTHLY UPDATE. Monthly packet with update on El Salvador, CISPES urgent actions and campaigns. \$15 & months. From CISPES

SHARE BULLETIN. Up-to-date information on situation of Salvadoran refugees in Central America. \$35 bi-monthly. SHARE, Box 53372, Washington, DC 20009

NACLA REPORT ON THE AMERICAS. "El Salvador - Why Revolution?" (Mar-Apr 1980) and "El Salvador - A Revolution Brews?" (July-Aug 1980). Clear, in-depth background information presented in two special issues. "El Salvador - Beyond Elections" (Mar-Apr 1982). What the March 82 elections did and don't mean. \$3 ea. - \$50/yr. NACLA 151 W 19 St., NY NY 10011

Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES)
(202) 887 5019

and

National Network in Solidarity with the Nicaraguan People (NNSNP)
(202) 223-2328

and

National Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (NISGUA)
(202) 483-0050

all 3 located at

930 F Street, NW #720
Washington, DC 20004

BOOKS

EL SALVADOR: THE FACE OF REVOLUTION. Bob Armstrong and Janet Wrenk. 1982. 260 pp. One of best recent overviews, well documented account of the people's struggle combined with personal experiences of authors. \$7.50. From CISPES

EL SALVADOR: CENTRAL AMERICA IN THE COLD WAR. Martin Gjestem, et al. 1981. 416 pp. A collection of articles, eye-witness reports, U.S. policy statements, and documents from FMLN, FDR, and the Salvadoran government. \$7.95 plus \$1.50 postage. Grove Press, 196 W Houston St., NY, NY 10014

ARCHBISHOP ROMERO: MARTYR OF EL SALVADOR. Placido Erazoan. 1981. 131 pp. Excellent personal account of the growth of Archbishop Romero as a popular spiritual leader by a priest who worked closely with him. \$4.95. Orbis Books, c/o Maryknoll Fathers, Maryknoll, NY 10545

THE UNITED STATES AND EL SALVADOR: MILITARY AND POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT. Arnon Hador. 1981. 131 pp. Most thoroughly documented chronology and analysis of U.S. military involvements, focuses on 1979-81. \$4.50 - \$5.50 postage. From U.S. ISRAIC, Box 4797 Berkeley, CA 94704

REVOLUTION IN EL SALVADOR: FROM COORDINATION TO UNITY. 1981. 38 pp. A collection of historical documents on the founding of the CRM, FDR, DRU and FMLN, with a chart of the revolutionary forces. \$2 - \$25 post. From Solidarity Publications

WOMEN AND WAR: EL SALVADOR. Women's International Resource Exchange. 1981. 45 pp. A unique collection of articles, poems, photos and sketches by and about the women of El Salvador. \$2.25 - \$5.50 post. From CISPES

EL SALVADOR: A REVOLUTION CONFRONTS THE UNITED STATES. Cynthia Aronson. 1982. 118 pp. Traces the development of the revolutionary process and the U.S. response, tables on arms transfers and breakdown of aid. \$5.95. Institute for Policy Studies, 1901 Q St. NW, Washington, DC 20009

REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN EL SALVADOR. American Civil Liberties Union and the American Watch Committee. 1982. 379 pp. Very thorough resource for documentation of human rights abuses. \$8.00. American Watch Committee, Rm 1303, 205 E 42 St., NY NY 10017

REFORM AND REPRESSION: U.S. POLICY IN EL SALVADOR 1950-1981. Robert Armstrong and Philip Whelan. 1982. 14 pp. A brief but in-depth historical analysis. \$1.00. From Solidarity Publications

EL SALVADOR LAND REFORM: IMPACT AUDIT. Laurence R. Simon and James Stephens. 1982 supplement by Martin Diskin. Extensively researched and documented report that focuses on the agrarian situation in El Salvador as well as the reform project. \$5. Oxfam, 415 Broadway, Boston, MA 02116.

AUDIO VISUAL

EL SALVADOR: ANOTHER VIETNAM. Excellent 16mm documentary overview of U.S. policy in Central America since 1948, extensive background to the current crisis in El Salvador. 53 min. color. Purchase: CARUS Films, 200 Park Ave. So. Rm 1319, NY NY 10003. Rental: CISPES national or regional offices.

EL SALVADOR: A COUNTRY IN CRISIS. Half hour slide show with cassette sound track. Though dated, still serves as an excellent overview and resource. Overview Latin America, 9 Sacramento St., Cambridge, MA 02138. \$69 incl. post.

DECISION TO WIN. 15 min documentary of life in El Salvador's zones of FMLN control. Color. 75 min. 1981. Rental: El Salvador Film and Video Project, 799 Broadway, Suite 325, NY, NY 10003

EL PUEBLO VENCERA. (The People Will Win) 16mm documentary of popular struggle during the current situation in a historical perspective. Color. 80 min. 1981. Rental: Comuna Sal, Box 113, Bronx, NY 10468

The Round Table is the quarterly journal of Catholic Worker life and thought in St. Louis. We welcome responses from our readers. The people working on this issue are: Clare Bussjaeger, Teka Childress, Virginia Druhe, Mary Dutcher, Delores Krinski, Larry Nolte, Ellen Rehg and Pete Rick.

IN EL SALVADOR

By Paul Reinert, S.J.

There are 63 other Jesuit colleges and universities scattered throughout the world from India to Japan, from Argentina to El Salvador. And I want to rest for a moment on the Jesuit University in San Salvador--the Universidad Centroamericana. There are about 400 men and women who graduated this past spring from UCA, as they call it. I visited this Jesuit college a few months ago, and I'd like to give you just a few insights into what your life would have been like the past four years if you had been at that Jesuit institution instead of this one. In most cases, your father, maybe your mother too, had either fled the country to Mexico or the United States. One or more of your family would be in prison accused of being a political subversive. Many of your brothers, sisters, close family would have been killed or have disappeared. Some would be fighting in the army of the government, some with the guerillas, because Salvador is being ravaged by a civil war.

What about your own future? Since you would be graduating from the Jesuit college there, you would have to face the fact that while everybody in your country, Salvador, admits that you have received the best academic training in the country, nonetheless you are aware that you will have a hard time getting a job--first, of course, because the country is in a state of complete economic chaos and collapse; but, more tragic in your case, the personnel managers of the big coffee and cotton industries will hesitate to hire you. Because you are coming from UCA, the



Jesuit college, you are suspect. You have been trained in certain values many of them find incompatible with their objectives. You are interested in justice, in fair wages for everybody, in decent working conditions, not just for yourself but for all of your fellow human beings. You are concerned about social justice and human rights. And that today in El Salvador is a negative in your career and employment qualifications.

In El Salvador I visited prisons for men and prisons for women, where I had interviews with young graduates of UCA who are locked up, some of them having been cruelly tortured, because their own military governmental officials accuse them of being political subversives. And when you ask: What is their crime? The answer: In

Paul Reinert, S.J., for many years president of St. Louis University and now Chancellor, was last year a member of an educational fact-finding tour to El Salvador.



young troops near Santa Clara, El Salvador pose with their American made weapons —
— From AP Wirephoto

the classes of high schools or colleges where they had been teaching, they were reported to have taught fundamental ethics about the personal worth and dignity of every individual, the right of every person to the necessities of life, to liberty, to earn one's daily bread. Some of these graduates of UCA have been in prison for three years, with no way in which they or their family can obtain any legal assistance; and they will be there three years from now or longer unless the military dictatorship now in power is somehow forced to change its policies.

What should be our own personal reactions to all of this? Let me tell you a little bit about my own reaction when I came back. I have said many times that be-

cause of what I heard and saw there, I am sure I'll never be the same person again.

First of all, when you know that at this moment human beings, just as intelligent and morally good as any of us are, are being treated in unbelievably degrading ways, we should get down on our knees and thank God for our families, our country, for everything that has made it possible for us to develop our God-given talents, to prepare ourselves to lead a constructive life, to enjoy all the opportunities that have been yours these past four years.

But a sense of gratitude is not enough. Unless we have water instead of blood in our veins, unless we have become totally calloused to what is happening to our brothers and sisters elsewhere, we have to de-

velop a deeper, more conscious sense of solidarity, of sympathetic union, of heartfelt support of young people so much like ourselves whose lives at the moment are filled with the bitterness of injustice and the hopelessness of having little to say about one's own destiny. But, solidarity and compassion are not enough either.

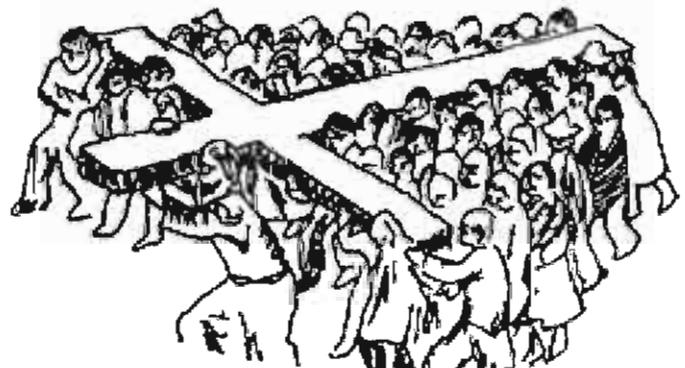
Christ said: "To whom more is given, of him or her, more will be demanded." We have a heavier burden to bear than others in making certain that we are not contributing to the widespread injustice and inhumanity which is so rampant in the world today. How can we strike a resounding blow for justice and peace in our world? This is where I appeal to each one of you as a graduate of a Jesuit institution and to all of you as a body, a Christian community. What we must do is exactly the same thing that always has had to be done in the past

We must deliberately choose

**to be much more counter - U.S. culture
than in the past.**

and doing business. It created a scandal. It was a huge stumbling block too difficult for many to contend with. Obviously, in the last 2000 years Christianity has assimilated and penetrated the prevailing cultures and the values of peoples and nations all over the world, but all along the danger has been and always will be that Christianity can lose its essential character in the process. What is happening in Latin America should be a mighty warning to you and me in the United States. We Christians can become too assimilated into today's culture to remain alive and vibrant as followers of Christ. We must deliberately choose to be much more counter-U.S. culture than in the past.

What I pray for us most of all is a sense of deep faith, a conviction that was so evident in the early Christian communities--the conviction that if they lived according to standards contrary to materialism and the misuse and abuse of their fellow human beings, the combined example of their counter-culture communities would be explosive in its effect on the larger community. If today other men and women can look at you and in amazement exclaim, "See how these Christians love one another!" the impact of your loving resistance will affect the laws, the policies, and the morality of this country--and will reach out, as Christianity did in the early centuries, to convert men and women into just and loving persons, who are both more human and more divine.



... because of what I heard and

saw there I'm sure I'll never be the same

person again.

when God visited God's people. In the Old Testament in preparation for the coming of Christ, God chose the Israelites, and to be faithful to God they had to live as a counter-culture, rejecting the values and standards of the society around them. Then when finally God did visit God's people, when the Word of God pitched a tent among us, those who accepted Christ as their Savior, their Leader, formed a community--but it was clearly a counter-culture community. They rejected two values embraced by most people around them, two basic values that intolerable to a true Christian:

1. What we call materialism today: over-attachment to things, possessions, riches and power;
2. Selfishness: an excessive concern about self to the exclusion of love and concern and care and compassion for all God's other children.

Clearly, pristine Christianity was a contradiction to accepted ways of living

It was during his student days at the University of San Salvador that Juan was picked up. One day after class, while he was waiting for a bus, a security policeman came up behind him, yanking his hair and throwing him to the ground. At first, because he wasn't "political", he was bewildered and hoped for mistaken identity when his papers were checked.

But the police didn't ask for his papers. They threw him on a jeep floor, and a soldier pressed one butt against his head and another on his back. When he tried to move, one of them slammed a rifle butt against the side of his face.

Next day they blindfolded him, and he felt terror lock a muscle in his neck. He began to breathe deeper to loosen the cramp. Like a drowning person, his life spun before his eyes. But in El Salvador, such desperate scrutinizing is focused: Had he been a subversive? But how? Of what was he accused? Juan was never to find out. No charges. No trial.

He felt the thud of two more bodies jar the jeep floor. "They piled us up like potato sacks, only they respect the food a little more." When the jeep started, he felt terrible sorrow for his mother, then stabbing anxiety when he remembered the pattern of arrest, followed by raid and murder of the arrestee's family.

During Juan's imprisonment, his father "disappeared." Neighbors saw the security forces come to the house. Three months later his mother died of a heart

attack. Juan never has located any of his six brothers.

When Juan began telling about his first day of torture, I felt him distance slightly; his voice flattened. I was sad suddenly that all we offered was horrified silence--none of us knew; we could barely imagine. Though safe, he was still alone. He seemed to know it, so he smiled a lot to reassure us, except when he told of his parents' deaths.

They began his torture in a place that was not a jail. He remembers hallways and torture rooms. He never saw other prisoners because he was always blindfolded when taken from his cell-room, but he heard the screams daily. For eight months he endured, when others went mad or committed suicide. Near the end he was delirious, and his hope was waning.

They pounded his hands with heavy metal rods, demanding responses to questions he couldn't answer. They asked for names, names. When he wouldn't answer, they hit him in the chest over and over. He still has continual pain in his chest and occasional lack of sensation in his spine. They used electric shock, pulled out his fingernails, hung him by his wrists, burned him with acid, broke his arms.

"But what were they after," I asked, "was it your student activities?"

"No, it wasn't that. It's true I was part of a student movement demanding curriculum change, an overhaul of the educational system, and student participation in university decisions. But their interest

This is an excerpt from a longer article on sanctuary in the December 1982 issue of Sojourners, 1321 Otis St. NE, Washington, D.C. 20017. Reprinted with permission.

JUAN'S STORY

A Refugee's Personal Account



was in my truck-driving years before the university. I had a route that ran into Guatemala toward the Atlantic coast. In both El Salvador and Guatemala I saw many cadavers lying in the roads. Back then, when they bothered to disguise things, they threw the bodies in the road so that high-speed trucks or cars would run over them, making their deaths appear to be accidents. But if you stopped you could see the bodies had been tortured. I think they thought I knew something from my travels."

Juan was unaware that a general amnesty had been granted prisoners when they blindfolded him and drove him to what was clearly a jail. The next day he was released in San Salvador. It was 1979.

He dwelled on that day somewhat, how friends and relatives came to greet prisoners, but he waited unsuccessfully for one of his brothers to step through the crowd. Then he began a 10-block walk to a friend's house. He laboriously pulled his 96 pounds through the streets. The lonely walk took him six hours. "I was weak, looked awful. . . . When I went to my friend's home he did not recognize me."

He stayed there three days before the National Guard came looking for him. He learned later that four out of the five prisoners released with him had been apprehended and their decapitated bodies thrown in the streets. When the guard came to his friend's front door, Juan leapt out a back window, scampered over a row of rooftops toward Rio Acelhuate, a city drainage river, where he dropped into the water and thus covered his retreat.

He slept on the river banks when he could walk no longer. Under the sun, and

under the stars, he pushed himself to walk out toward Aguilares, where friends would feed him and he could move toward the mountains to hide. For months he traveled from town to town in the Chalatenango area, seeking the whereabouts of his brothers. He received brief protection from friends, and then he shuttled back into the mountains' protection, where he healed his wounds.

Juan finished his story, telling of his escape to Honduras, then Mexico, and finally his connection with the underground railroad created by religious groups on both sides of the Mexican-American borders and extending now to Chicago. He made his way out slowly, carefully, because in Honduras and Guatemala, Salvadoran refugees are targets for military and right-wing death squads. In Mexico, Salvadorans are jailed or extorted. Mexican border guards demand payment from families carrying life savings in hidden pockets.

But for Central American refugees, the United States border is the "big round-up." The INS returns to El Salvador an average of 500 refugees a month. These refugees, 75 per cent of whom are women and children, are met at the El Salvador International Airport by armed military.

Some of these deportees meet the fate of Santa Chirino Amaya. After Amaya received a traffic ticket, he begged the INS not to return him to his war-torn country. But he was deported, and a month later, his decapitated body was found at a crossroad known as the Road of Death Because of the Salvadoran patrols in the area.



The Pope's Visit to Nicaragua

By Peggy Healy, M.M.

The Holy Father's visit to Nicaragua on March 4 lasted only eleven hours. You may have read many reports of what happened, but it is impossible to understand unless one examines the events that preceded the visit.

The Pope came to visit a Church that has been deeply divided--not only in Nicaragua--but in all of Latin America. The repercussions of the "preferential option for the poor" which was made years ago by the Latin American Bishops at Medellin and Puebla as a direct result of Vatican II, have produced radical changes in the Church--changes that have been rejected by a sector of the hierarchy and religious. Throughout the continent, there are widely differing and opposite views about theology--the role of the Church, the understanding of Church authority, the meaning of the Kingdom of God, the political involvement of Christians. These polarizations are further complicated in Nicaragua where the Church is also split along

political lines between those who basically support the revolution and those who oppose it. Both groups had their own expectations for the visit of the Pope and their own role in the outcome.

As soon as the papal visit was confirmed, joint committees of government and Church people were set up in each town to plan for the transportation of the people to Managua. Christian communities and Church people were often in charge of finding trucks, reserving space for those who wanted to go, preparing food, etc. All gasoline, both for private and public vehicles, was provided by the government. In most areas there was a great deal of cooperation on a local level between church and government. Most of the problems centered around the archdiocese of Managua where the Church-State tensions have been high due to errors on both sides.

The people themselves spent considerable time preparing for the visit. For weeks prior to the visit, they studied John Paul

Peggy Healy, M.M., has been a missionary to Nicaragua for several years. She has worked both in Managua and in the countryside.

II--his background, his speeches in other Latin American countries, his role as leader of the Catholic Church, the situation in Nicaragua and Central America that the Pope would find. From these studies, the people began to build up an image in their minds of what this man could do for them and their country during these difficult days. They saw John Paul as a man of peace and someone who would condemn the violence and speak out for peace in Nicaragua. Their studies gave the people a human Pope who would understand their problems, who himself had been a worker, who had known war. They even read his poetry.

But despite the good intentions, expressed by both the Vatican and the Nicaraguan government, tensions remained and the already present divisions in the Church were palpable. Each religious and political persuasion hoped that the papal visit would support their position. These diverse expectations, combined with an unexpected national tragedy, set the stage for the events that unfolded in the plaza. Four days before the Pope arrived, Somocista counterrevolutionary forces ambushed and massacred 17 young Sandinista militia from Managua. The memorial service for these young people was held the day before in the same plaza in which the Pope would celebrate his outdoor Mass. Mourning and anger over the deaths was inextricably bound to the visit of the Pope and made it natural that many would expect a word of sorrow, condolence, a prayer for their dead, or a denunciation much the same as the Pope's condemnation of the executions in Guatemala earlier in his trip.

We want to very briefly review some of the events of the visit.

The Arrival Daniel Ortega's very lengthy speech at the airport, which was referred to by some U.S. press as a political harangue, was branded by many as the Nicaraguan government's first mistake in the papal visit. Most people who heard the speech were not aware that Ortega was quoting textually a lengthy letter written by a Nicaraguan bishop in 1921 to a U.S. Cardinal. The letter, written during U.S. Marine occupation of Nicaragua, was stridently critical of U.S. policy, and Ortega

used it to make the point that the same situation exists today. Many felt that it was a rude way to receive the Holy Father. There is no doubt that the government used the arrival of the Pope to denounce U.S. aggression against Nicaragua. Our feeling is that the long speech was inappropriate, but we also believe that one must distinguish between undiplomatic behavior and immoral behavior. El Salvador and Guatemala gave the Pope a diplomatic welcome but were killing their own people at the same moment as they extended their welcome.

The Pope's remarks at the airport were brief, from a prepared text. He said that he wanted to make a contribution to peace in the region and to dialogue. He emphasized that his trip was a pastoral one, not a political one. Many people remarked that he looked tired, aloof, distant, or even angry. They were surprised that he did not display the same warmth, reaching out to the crowds, the gestures that were so characteristic of his other Latin American visits. On the receiving line, he encountered a kneeling Father Ernesto Cardenal, one of the four priests who work in the Nicaraguan government. Father Cardenal reached for the Holy Father's ring to kiss it, but the Pope withdrew his hand. He then went by helicopter to Leon.

Mass in the July 19th Plaza For many, the trip to Managua had begun the day before, when the long and arduous trip from the northernmost sectors began in busses and trucks. The mood was festive, excited, expectant despite the tensions in the country. For many, it was their first trip to the capital and the people were coming to see their Pope. The Church and government people who were leading the transportation effort instructed the people that this was a religious celebration, that political slogans were not appropriate, and that Nicaragua should give John Paul a dignified welcome. People composed songs to the Pope and made up religious slogans.

Our experience in Ciudad Sandino, San Juan de Lemay, Leon, San Isidor, Ocotal, Jalapa and other areas was that there was no control by the Sandinistas over who went, much less a prohibition of non-Sandinistas from attending. Between 600,000

"The Mothers of the Heroes and Martyrs,"

who stood up and began to walk toward the altar with pictures of their dead sons and daughters.



and 700,000 people jammed into the plaza. This represents $\frac{1}{4}$ of the population and $\frac{1}{4}$ of all whose age and health made it feasible for them to attend. It was the largest concentration of people in the history of Nicaragua. There were some incidents between the government and groups who sought to circumvent regulations for getting to the plaza--regulations that had been set up by both government and church officials for security reasons.

People waited for hours on foot in the 104 degree heat. As the hour for the Pope's arrival drew nearer, tensions became more palpable. A huge group of people who supported Archbishop Obando had taken over the platform which had been reserved for the press, and they were loudly yelling their support for the Archbishop.

The front rows of the crowd in the plaza, made up of militia and people from the block committees whose job it was to contain the overflowing plaza, were equally vocal in their calls for "a Church on the side of the poor."

The Pope's appearance in gleaming gold vestments was wildly cheered by all the

people, regardless of the divisions. He was their Pope, and they were anxious to hear his message. The Mass began with an unscheduled introduction by Archbishop Obando and continued without incident until about the middle of the homily. The theme of the Pope's words was episcopal authority and church unity--a particularly delicate theme in Nicaragua. He spoke of the authority of the bishops and the need for unity under them, and the people applauded and listened. But many waited expectantly for a reference to the broader national situation as he had done so aptly in other countries; a word about the attacks on Nicaragua; an expression of condolence for their dead. None was forthcoming.

In the second part of the homily, the Pope began to address the theme of the "popular church", and his tone became more reprimanding and his facial expression angrier. It was about that time when some in the crowd began to shout "queremos la paz"--"we want peace." The Pope finally raised his voice sternly and called for silence. And from that point on, the situation deteriorated; and the yelling went

out of control with all different groups shouting all manner of slogans, The "Mothers of the Heroes and Martyrs", who had been given a place of honor on the side platform, stood up and began to walk towards the altar with photographs of their dead sons and daughters, demonstrating their desire for a prayer for the dead in Nicaragua. One of them grabbed the microphone from the choir and began to speak over the voice of the Pope.

The homily ended, and some calm returned to the plaza; but the shouting continued till the end of the Mass. All went home saddened by what had happened.

The Departure The Pope went immediately to the airport. Daniel Ortega again addressed the Holy Father, this time without a prepared text. We have read accounts in the U.S. press which said that Ortega's parting words scolded and berated the Pope. For those of us who saw it, it seemed much more that he was pleading with the Holy Father to understand what had happened. "When our people say, 'we want peace,' it is born of a situation of pain, of tears, of permanent martyrdom. Our people are crucified every day; they rightfully demand solidarity. . . . When our people ask for peace, they want it not to acquire personal wealth, for we do not look for personal gain, but rather they want peace to be able to fulfill their basic necessities for life and subsistence." His face was sad; his eyes were fixed on the ground. John Paul II read the text of his closing remarks. He referred to those who had not been able to attend the two liturgies. He thanked everyone for his stay and closed by saying: "God bless this Church; God protect Nicaragua."

Aftermath Almost all of Nicaragua was saddened by what happened. Many people were deeply ashamed by what happened in the plaza and called it rude and insulting. Some blamed the pueblo, some blamed the FSLN, some blamed the Pope. We believe that it was probably a combination of many factors. The government clearly wanted the Pope to address himself to the

U.S. armed intervention of Nicaragua and clearly tried to push that in every way possible. Those in opposition to the Sandinistas wanted the visit to be a blessing of their position, and they did their share of provoking. Both of these groups included sectors of the Church.

The people in the plaza were mixed, but the dynamic of the crowd had its own momentum that was beyond anyone's control. And the Holy Father, perhaps because of the preparation he had received from his advisors, came to Nicaragua with a stern directive for Church unity and never departed from his prepared texts to speak to the real concerns and desires of the people of Nicaragua. The very same words that he used the next day in El Salvador regarding peace and the situation on the borders would have provoked a totally different response from the plaza in Managua.

The results have been serious. The division within the Church and the division between certain sectors of the Church and the government, is deeper than ever. Many Catholics and some of the hierarchy feel that the Pope's visit gave them the blessing they wanted to continue in their opposition to the government and to avoid dialogue that is so sorely needed. Many other Christians, including large numbers of young people who were already skeptical of the Church's ability to accompany revolutionary social change, left the plaza that day with their hopes crushed. The great majority of the people feel confused and saddened. One thing is certain. We do not believe that anyone desired the outcome of what happened at the Mass in the plaza--neither the government, nor the Church, nor the Pope. But each had its role to play.

Perhaps the one positive outcome of the visit is that all sectors of the Church and the government must reflect even more deeply on how to resolve the divisions that were laid bare on March 4. And hopefully the Holy Father and his advisors will also reflect on the events of that day and use it to deepen their own understanding of the situation in Central America. The complexity of the reality is a mighty challenge to all who are searching for peace in this region.

SANCTUARY

In living persons, the pain of Central America comes walking into our country and consciences. Picking up on our faith tradition of Sanctuary, we can help refugees by offering them our homes and, especially, our places of worship as safe harbor. Here is a collection of thoughts about the tradition of Sanctuary and the call to offer it here and now. Taking these thoughts in, the challenge is before us... Call the Inter-Faith Committee on Latin America (227-8608) to learn how to offer Sanctuary to Central American refugees.



In the Judeo-Christian tradition, sanctuary has had a dual meaning. It is both a place where a community of faith gathers for worship and a place of refuge and protection. Because of this dual meaning of holiness and refuge, sanctuary is a partic-

ularly potent image for churches and synagogues as we consider our responsibility for the vulnerable refugees from El Salvador and Guatemala. As communities of faith, we are called upon to bring these two meanings of sanctuary into a powerful unity. The place of worship is to serve as a place of protection.

Marilyn Lorenz-Weinkauff
Inter-Faith Committee on
Latin America

Yahweh was the first to proclaim sanctuary, commanding Moses to set aside cities and places of refuge in Canaan where people could seek asylum from the "blood avengers." The cities of refuge were for the Israelites, "as well as for the stranger and sojourner among you." (Num 35:15)

M McConnell & R, Golden
Theology of Sanctuary

Karen House Catholic Worker 314.621.4052 www.karenhousecw.org 1840 Hogan St. Louis, MO 63106

"I had to weigh this act of civil disobedience with the very real threat to these peoples' lives if they return to their homeland."

Archbishop Rembert Weakland
Archbishop of Milwaukee



The ancient notion that altars, holy sites and temples be regarded, by their very nature, as places of refuge is not uniquely biblical or Christian. Sanctuary was a more or less formalized practice, for example, in Egypt, in Syria, Greece and Rome. Political fugitives, criminals, debtors, and slaves on the run all passed beyond the pale of revenge and justice by making it into the precincts of a recognized shrine.

Bill Kellerman
Sojourners Apr 83

"When it is illegal to provide refuge for homeless the struggle for justice has reached a new stage. At that historic moment the pastoral has merged with the political, service is prophetic, love is subversive, and remembering is a revolutionary act."

Rev. Sid Mohn, at Wellington Ave. UCC Church, Chicago



It was recognized in Roman law, medieval canon law and English Common law. During medieval times the law insured that every church was a potential sanctuary.

During the seventeenth century the whole North American continent was seen as a sanctuary from the religious and political persecutions of Europe. Sanctuary became a part of the accepted understanding of what it meant to be American by both people here and around the world. That sentiment was finally engraved on the Statue of Liberty, "give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to be free." In the 1850's after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act making it illegal to harbor or assist a slave in gaining freedom, religious people and churches became key points along the Underground Railroad. Churches again became sanctuaries defying the law to do it.

M. McConnell & R. Golden
Theology of Sanctuary

Sanctuary offers a concrete and direct way to challenge the inhuman policy of the U.S. government in Central America and of the INS, as well as providing a direct service to the refugees created as a result of these policies.

Marilyn Lorenz-Weinkauff

The main incidents of the claiming of sanctuary in the history of Israel occurred when Adonijah and later Joab sought protection from Solomon by laying hold the horns of the altar (1Kings 1&2). But the most clearly spelled out tradition of sanctuary is found in the Torah passages concerning the "cities of refuge" (Ex 21:13-14; Nm 35:6-28; Dt 4:41-43; and 19:4-13).

Bill Kellerman
Sojourners Apr 83

More recently, during World War II monasteries hid Jews in Nazi Germany and for the Jews escaping Bethel, sanctuary was providing false documents, opening a door or sharing a scrap of food.

M. McConnell & R. Golden
Theology of Sanctuary



EL SALVADOR

- A History

By Mike McIntyre

El Salvador has been a hot news item since October 15, 1979, the day a group of young, reformist army officers overthrew the repressive (even by Salvadoran standards) government of Gen. Carlos Humberto Romero. I will assume, then, that readers of this article have a rough idea of post 1979 Salvadoran history. What I hope to do is briefly sketch a history of El Salvador during the years when it never made the evening news.

El Salvador's modern history began in the mid-19th century when the communal lands which formed the basis of a subsistence economy were abolished by decree to make way for the great coffee plantations which have since been the backbone of El Salvador's economy. Significantly, these plantations were owned by Salvadorans. Foreign capital was present during this period, but it served to create an infrastructure (electricity, railroads, communications) for the coffee economy. The "Fourteen Families" who controlled the growth and export of this coffee became the ruling oligarchy of El Salvador. Politics in El Salvador was a family affair, purely a matter of jockeying for position by the members of the oligarchy.

In 1932, though, the bottom fell out. Coffee exports declined from \$16 million in 1928 to \$4.8 million in 1932. Then, as now, El Salvador was the most densely populated country in Central America, with virtually no idle lands for subsistence agriculture in time of economic crisis. Thousands of Salvadorans were forced to migrate. Thousands more who stayed were mobilized by the Salvadoran Communist Party (PCS) and its trade union, The Regional Federation of Salvadoran Workers (FRTS). In January 1932, the PCS was denied seats in the

national legislature and municipal assemblies. The Party set January 22 as a day of insurrection, intended to topple the government of Gen. Maximiliano Hernandez Martinez.

The PCS, however, was riddled with government spies, and the insurrection was rapidly - and bloodily - crushed. Four thousand were killed in the put-down of the insurrection itself. Thirty thousand more were killed in the government sponsored massacre ("la matanza") which followed. Martinez ruled almost without interruption until 1944. The military has held political power (on behalf of the oligarchy) continuously since 1932.





Nevertheless, changes were in the wind for El Salvador. The country enjoyed a coffee boom in the late 1940s. Coffee exports of \$18.7 million in 1945 shot up to \$76 million in 1950. An alliance of the military, a technocratic intelligentsia, a small industrial bourgeoisie, and that section of the coffee oligarchy involved directly in export (as opposed to the growers), emerged victorious from a series of power struggles between 1944 and 1948. They were determined to diversify and modernize the Salvadoran economy. New taxes on coffee exports were designed to finance industrial development.

This new ruling class faced the problem of finding markets for its new products. An internal market could have been created only through radical land reform measures. The opposition of the coffee growers would have made this impossible, even if this class had been willing to undertake such measures.

Instead, Salvadoran products continued to be designed for an export market. Originally, Salvadoran goods competed very successfully in a regional market, with Honduras as its

largest customer. The 1969 war with Honduras destroyed the "Common Market" in Central America, and left Salvadoran industry without markets.

In response to the ensuing crisis, the government of Col. Arturo Armando Molina (1972-1977) announced a series of measures designed to attract foreign capital to El Salvador: Assured low wages (averaging \$4.00 per day), a "union-free environment", tax breaks, a free trade zone in San Bartolo. By 1974, foreign capital was involved in half of all Salvadoran businesses. El Salvador was now competing in a world market on the strength of a low-paid, docile labor force.

You may well have surmised that none of this industrial development did a lot of good for the Salvadoran peasant or worker. The number of landless peasants increased throughout the post-World War II period, both absolutely and in percentage terms. In 1975 it was estimated that the average family needed \$704 per year to provide minimal food, clothing and shelter. Eighty percent of the population earned less.

During these years, limited political reforms led to the creation of viable opposition parties. Three of them, the Christian Democrats (PDC), the social-democratic National Revolutionary Movement (MNR), and the communist-influenced National Democratic Union (UDN) coalesced to form the National Opposition Union (UNO) in preparation for the 1972 elections. Following the typical pattern, their candidate, José Napoleon Duarte, won the election, but lost the count. The National Conciliation Party (PCN) retained power in El Salvador.

While the major opposition parties, including the outlawed Communist Party (PCS), countenanced an electoral route to power even after the 1972 election, portions of these parties broke off to form guerilla units. Those who left the Communist Party formed the Popular Liberation Forces (FPL). The left wing of the Christian Democrats broke off and formed the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP). A further split in the ERP led to the creation of the Armed Forces of National

Resistance (FARN). These groups styled themselves "political-military organizations."

A parallel development in the mid-1970s was the rise of the "mass organization." Developing outside the structures of political parties they focused on popular organizing; rather than armed struggle, yet they considered themselves to be revolutionary organizations. The main mass organizations were the People's Revolutionary Bloc (BPR), the Front for Unified People's Action (FAPU) and the People's Leagues (LP-28).

Naturally, the successes of the mass organizations threatened the Molina government's plans to attract foreign investment with a politically quiescent labor force. So, with government encouragement and assistance, a number of paramilitary death squads rose up -- ORDEN, the White Warrior's Union (UGB), FALANGE, the Organization for the Liberation from Communism (OLC). These groups roamed the country throughout the late 1970s (and the early '80s), terrorizing the whole population while fighting an ill-defined war against "communist subversion."

Partially in response to this repression, the "political-military" and "mass" organizations began to work more closely together. The FPL paired with the BPR, FARN with FAPU, the ERP with LP-28. The reign of the death squads seemed to aid rather than hinder the growth of these organizations.

Meanwhile, a mild proposal for land reform advanced by Col. Molina in 1976 led to a reaction by the coffee oligarchy. The reform, which would have touched a whopping 4% of El Salvador's land, never had a chance. The PCN candidate for the fixed 1977 elections was Gen. Carlos Humberto Romero, the leader of ORDEN. Repression under Romero reached a fever pitch and isolated the Salvadoran government.

The October 15 coup promised great things, but by December it was evident that it would be unable to carry them out. By early 1980, the ruling junta was controlled by the far right, with José Napoleon Duarte serving as a democratic figurehead.

Meanwhile, the mass and political-military organizations rapidly came to an agreement to create a political coordinating council and a unified military com-



mand. They were later joined by the PCS, UDN, MNR and center-left wing of the PDC in the creation of the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR). The FDR, with its broad political base, rapidly became the focus of opposition to the ruling junta.

(For the facts in this article, I am deeply indebted to the report "El Salvador-Why Revolution" by Robert Armstrong and Janet Shenk, appearing in NACLA Report on the Americas).

Mike McIntyre lives at Karen House. He served 30 days this summer at the County Workhouse for trespassing at General Dynamics.

Book Review

The Country Between Us

Reviewed by Dennis Kennedy, C.M.

The Country Between Us by Carolyn Forché

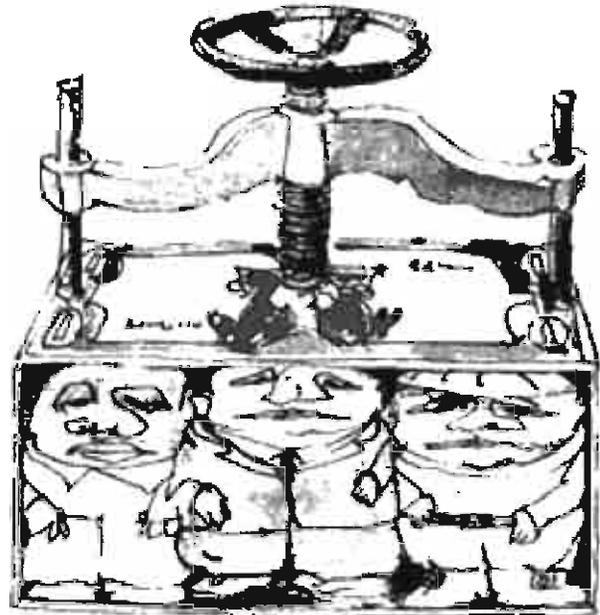
(New York, Harper and Row, 1981)

Who are we to believe about Central America? What's the story in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala? There are such conflicting reports that someone must be doctoring the truth. Who's telling the truth, who's doctoring it, who's spreading propaganda? President Reagan and the CIA give one version, committees in Congress another, the countries themselves still another. Perhaps we had best listen to someone who has been there.

Eyewitnesses who can convince us of the validity of their experience are the best antidote to propaganda. Of course, theirs could be propaganda too; but we rely on the character of those who testify to us. The British critic John Berger once wrote, "Propaganda preserves within people outdated structures of feeling and thinking while forcing new experiences upon them." It transforms them into puppets--whilst most of the strain brought about by the transformation remains politically harmless as inevitably incoherent frustration. The only purpose of such propaganda is to make people deny and then abandon the selves which otherwise their own experience would create." Propaganda jerks us around like puppets.

This woman, Carolyn Forché, the young, passionate poet whose book won the Lamont Poetry Selection for 1981, titles a section of her poems, "In Salvador, 1978-80". In the medium of poetry, passion is expected and the perspective is personal. Much of modern poetry is quite self-revelatory of both feeling and conviction; however, political poetry is very often accused of being propaganda. Such accusations arose when The Country Between Us by Carolyn Forché first came to the attention of critics. Forché is an accurate eye and an appealing style; her poetry has vision and wit

when appropriate. But what has attracted the most attention is her content - she has a passionate commitment to justice for the poor in El Salvador. She has many friends there, especially women.



Her relationships lead her to identify with the struggling poor who are attempting to bring about an end to the senseless violence and the unjust oppression. I do not find the argument that her poetry is propaganda convincing; her voice is not at all strident or ideological. Rather, it is a warm, caring voice, often angry, often in pain, but rarely graceless. Although parts of her book range from such subjects as European travel, travails and trespass, Czech political prisoners, the fragrant paths of Detroiters, selective service, love and reunion and Viet Nam veterans, the first, final and most compelling of her work is about her time in El Salvador. Unlike Didion, she is fiercely invested in her subject. "I will live and living cry out until my voice is gone/ to its hallows of earth, where with our/ hands and by the lives we have chosen/ we will dig deep into our depths./ I have done all that I could do."

Dennis Kennedy, C.M., teaches at Kenrick, our diocesan seminary. He has "taken house" and celebrates liturgy with us.

Unlike the bureaucrats she flays, Forché uses words to reveal rather than to conceal. Here are some examples of her artful imagery writing about the apathy of the north to what happens in El Salvador. "Knowing that while birds and warmer weather/ are forever moving north,/ the cries of those who vanish/ might take years to get here." "She had come to flesh out the memory of the poet/ whose body was never found./ Had it changed? It was different./ In Salvador nothing is changed." "There is nothing one man will not do to another." "The breath of time where we began/ among each other, where we lived/ in the hour farthest from God."

The three most striking poems in this collection are: "The Colonel", "Return"



and "Ourselves or Nothing". "The Colonel", written almost in prose form to accent the stunning ordinariness of it, is a description of a pleasant dinner at the home of one of El Salvador's prominent officers. "There was some talk of how difficult it had become to govern. The parrot said hello on the terrace. The Colonel told it to shut up, and pushed himself from the table. My friend said to me with his eyes: say nothing. The Colonel returned with a sack used to bring groceries home. He spilled many human ears on the table. They were like dried peach halves. There is no other way to say this. He took one of them in his hands, shook it in our faces, dropped it into a water glass. It came alive there. I am tired of fooling around, he said. As for the rights of anyone, tell your people they can go fuck themselves. He swept the ears to the floor with his

arm and held the last of his wine in the air. Something for your poetry, no? he said. Some of the ears on the floor caught this scrap of his voice. Some of the ears on the floor were pressed to the ground." Forché's disdain of poetics in this instance heightens the impact of her account. Only the last image saves her piece from straightforward reportage. It reminds me of a poem by the Polish writer Ryszard Krynicki entitled, "Don't Shoot". "Soldiers, don't shoot at us!/ Don't shoot at your brothers./ We are defenseless, and you/ will have to come back to us./ Those who drafted you/ and are ordering you now/ to shoot/ will one day deny giving the orders." It is this blend of the political with the personal that removes their art from the realm of propaganda.

In "Return", Forché writes to her friend, Josephine, about her lingering

The Colonel returned with

a sack used to bring groceries home.

He spilled many human ears on the

table.

images upon returning to America. She started at tire blow-outs, kept watch of strange cars and strained to remember things impossible to forget. "You know the mix/ of machetes with whiskey, the slip of the tongue that costs hundreds of deaths./ You've seen the pits where men and women/ are kept the few days it takes without/ food and water. You've heard the cocktail/ conversation on which their release depends." She writes of how her time in El Salvador continually intervenes into the ordinary stream of her life. Relationships, material goods, even sex, are permanently effected. She concludes the poem with these words: "We no longer have the hearts,/ the strength, the lives of women./ Your problem is not your life as it is/ in America, not that your hands, as you/ tell me, are tied to do something. It is/ not your right to feel powerless,

Better/ people than you were powerless./
You have not returned to your country./
but to a life you never left." (emphasis
mine)



The last poem in this collection, "Ourselves or Nothing", is a brilliantly powerful and touching journey through the events and atrocities of Forché's life. She addresses it to a writer she lived with and shared much of this experience. The poem in a few short pages surveys their relationship, and moves through the events of the age: concentration camps, the holocaust, Prague, Viet Nam and her time in El Salvador. The poem ends with a plea to her country for conscience "...in Salvador/ where the blood will never soak/ into the ground, everywhere and always/ go after that which is lost./ There is a cyclone fence between/ ourselves and the slaughter and behind it/ we hover in a calm protected world like/ netted fish, exactly like netted fish./ It is either the beginning or the end/ of the world, and the choice is ourselves/ or nothing."

This marvelous woman's work is due an audience as broad as possible, especially in the countries of the North.

Carolyn Forché explores the relationship between America and what it views as its troublesome neighbors to the South. The experiences she lets us share in are simultaneously despairingly frightening and hopeful. Such is the experience of those who choose to taste even for a short while, the lives of the poor. The churches of America have begun to explore

the possibility of opting for the poor; in other words, taking the experience of the poor as the beginning point for any criteria for action on behalf of social justice. Any of these works demonstrates definitively the need for some sort of action on behalf of justice for the poor.

The Reagan Administration is shouting about the possible isolation of the United States by world communism. We have always been afraid of that isolation yet the actions we have begun to take in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala lead to an ever deepening isolation from the struggling poor in these

We are in effect

isolating ourselves by our

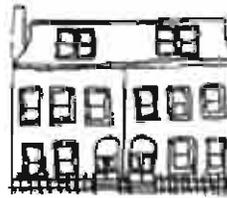
arrogance and corporate greed.

countries. We are in effect isolating ourselves by our arrogance and corporate greed. The Christian message is conversion from the arms race, which is built on the backs of the poor; from consumerism, which has become a form of idolatry; and from the ever-spiraling violence that abuses the poor and might fearfully come home to roost in our own country. We must use our intelligence and faith wisely in these troubled times and distant places.



Miss Crozier-Burroughs

From Little House



(The following is an interview conducted by Virginia Druhe with two members of the Little House household about their goings on during these summer months.)

Q. Will you please introduce yourselves to our readers?

A. I'm Sharon. I'm working. I get paid tomorrow--my first paycheck!

Q. What will you do with it?

A. \$50 goes to someone I owe. Then a thermos and comfortable shoes.

Q. What is your job?

A. I clip bags. 150 lb. potato sacks, some 100 lb. sacks for Purina. The last two days we got out 100,000 bags.

Q. How many people did that?!

A. 7 sewers, 7 clippers, inspectors. . . 30 in all.

Q. What's a clipper?

A. The clipper cuts the sacks apart from each other after they're sewn.

Q. Do you like the work?

A. Yes.

Q. B.J., can you tell us something about yourself?

A. I've lived at the Worker for 5 years. I helped paint it before it opened. I've been at the Little House for 2 years. Other than that, I sleep, eat, go to work, get up, go to work, eat--that's all. I do my job in 17 seconds.

Q. What do you do in 17 seconds?

A. Answer a call, look up a number, give it out. We're going on strike next week.

Q. You're a directory assistance operator.

A. Yeah. But I haven't worked since Memorial Day.

Q. Why not?

A. Because I had temporar mandibular joint dysfunction. Horrible name, isn't it?

Q. What is it?

A. Severe pain from muscle spasms in the jaw that can't be stopped.

Q. Does that mean you couldn't open your mouth?

A. Hardly.

Q. What caused it?

A. A root canal. My teeth are rotting from chemotherapy that I had when I had leukemia. I got the leukemia from going to school next to an abandoned factory in Weldon Springs and playing in it. There are pits of radioactive material there.

Lots of people from there have leukemia. We used to swim in the graphite pits. Now they are guarded. The plant was used during World War II. My next door neighbor has leukemia now.

Q. Is there anything to be done?

A. The EPA had a town meeting. People are upset. Lots of people came. They say it costs too much to clean it up.

Q. Is your jaw healed now?

A. Yes.

Q. How did it get healed?

A. With myotherapy.

Q. Which is?

A. Pushing on different trigger points to relax a muscle.

Q. A happy ending?

A. Yes. All is well.

Q. Sharon, what else is happening at your house this summer?

A. Well, I spent a lot of time looking for work. A bunch of friends of Joan Schlieter helped us paint the back porch blue and paint the kitchen. We put in an orchard but the trees are dead. Fleetwood, our dog, had surgery.

Mark Scheu and Pat Coy are moving into the flat here. Mark has been very helpful. We're glad to have him around and look forward to Pat being here.

Both our refrigerators went out at the same time. In the heat. That was the pits. We just try to keep cool. That's all we do.

Q. Where is May Ann?

A. In El Paso.

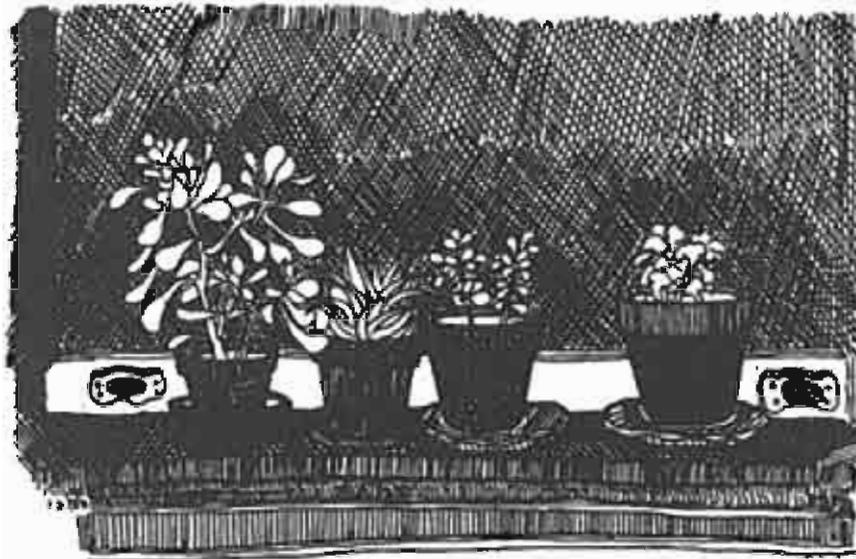
Q. Doing what?

A. She went to the Sisters of Loretto Assembly. She called and said she had talked to Mary Ann Gleason for two hours and that she would be glad to be home.

Q. Anything else you want to tell us?

A. Last week we saw a man pull a gun on the security guard at the National store and the guard pulled his gun. We were right behind them. He was stealing a case of beer. Do you want to know more?

Q. No! That's enough! Thank you.

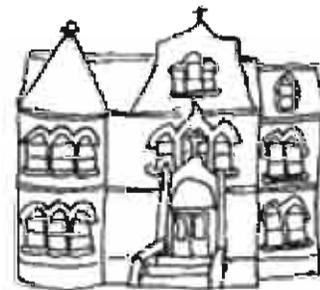


Catherine Dolan

From Karen House

"On The Road"

By Mary Dutcher



The Hebrew people had no particular word equivalent to our "thank you." The way they expressed their gratitude was to recount or retell all the things that had been done for them by the person to whom they were grateful. This recounting of my summer's experience is my testimony of gratitude to God and to all the people whose generosity and goodness I experienced. I am especially grateful for the way I kept bumping into old friends from St. Louis unexpectedly.

SOJOURNERS' PEACE PENTECOST

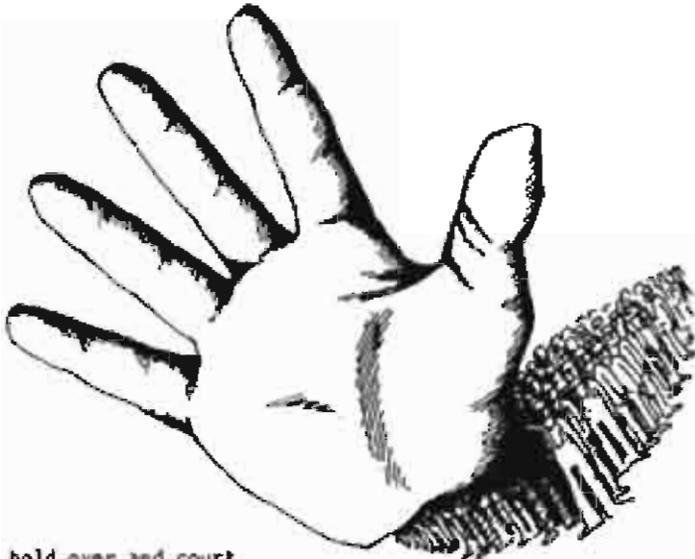
Nick, May and Julie from the U. of Missouri at St. Louis Newman Center generously provided me a spot in their car for the trip to Washington, D.C. to participate in Sojourners' Peace Pentecost. The prayer service in the National Cathedral on Pentecost filled the Cathedral to standing room capacity. I found myself seated in a balcony, remembering the balcony I had occupied in a similar crowded interfaith event 14 years before, during the 1969 October Moratorium and March to end the war in Viet Nam. There is a vast difference between the two movements. Most obviously, the current movement is not student led; nor is it based in the campuses. It is also much more faith-based and feminist than was the peace movement of the 60's. Religious women have played and are playing a much more central role in this movement than they did in the 60's. My

gratitude goes to Dorothy Day, Mary Luke Tobin, SL, Joan Cavanaugh and Joann Malone--women who have blazed the trail.

I stayed with Luanne Schinzel, OSF. She was one of the four women who opened Karen House in 1977, as well as Cass House in 1979, and is now subscriptions editor at Sojourners. It was such a treat to be with her. I was a little saddened that we had to be in separate affinity groups for the civil disobedience action at the Capitol scheduled for the next day (Pentecost Monday).

But--and I do not know if this is truly a model of how God acts in human history--this following event I feel conscience bound to recount because of the gratitude and wonderment it evoked in me: The civil disobedience action consisted of praying in the Capitol rotunda, which evidently amounts to illegal use of symbolic language under the applicable ordinance. Midway through, when about one third of the 250 people had been arrested, I urgently felt nature's call. The police kindly escorted me forth (and back, which rather humorously made me appear as if rejected from the arrestees). As I was re-entering the rotunda, one of the officers directing the proceedings pre-emptorily ordered me to be seated at an entirely different section from where I had arisen--and exactly next to Luanne! So, she became #194 and me #195 and we got to spend the whole next day together--arrest,

The traveling Mary Dutcher, a member of the Karen House community for the past 5 years, is learning Jungian psychology for the journey inward.



hold-over and court.

We were given a choice of \$50 or 5 days in jail. I chose the 5 days in jail, as did 20 other women, including several from Catholic Worker houses in New York, Detroit and Pittsburgh: good company. . . I think what I will carry with me most vividly from that experience--in addition to the strange hour of breakfast in jail (4:30 a.m.)--is the generosity of the various more long term prisoners who shared with me pen, paper, envelopes, candy, reading material, etc. Also, I will remember our daily periods of prayer, which possessed a simplicity and intensity in that environment that I've rarely experienced elsewhere. We prayed twice daily, and were joined increasingly by other prisoners as our stay progressed.

INTERLUDE

Since my retreat would not start til June 6, I had a free week that I promptly spent engaging in the spontaneous path-crossings with friends that came to characterize the summer and, for me, God's grace. I visited Chris Nieman, Tom Kegelman and their 6 month daughter, Madeleine in Williamsburg and participated in the demonstration for economic justice at the Summit, which was occurring there that week. The New York Times described Williamsburg as "charming and vapid"; but I found it warm and fascinating, staying at the Nieman's. Chris's parents who had lived and taught in Japan. Tom, who works as a contractor, allowed me to work washing windows with him for a day to earn enough money to fly People's Express to spend a few days with Betsy Corner, Randy Kehler and their daughter, Lillian, in Western Massachusetts. These are two sets of dear friends who have moved from St. Louis this year, whom I was not certain I would see for years.

THIRTY DAY RETREAT

From Massachusetts I caught a bus for Albany to begin a thirty day retreat directed by St. Ursula McAgon RSCM, at Kenwood Convent of the Sacred Heart. Thirty day retreats are not topics that can be adequately described in this limited space. So I will simply share my conviction that for the basic, normal, hurried product of American culture, they are an unambiguous good. We should enjoy them more often.

During the course of the retreat, I unexpectedly got to spend one of the scheduled "days of repose" with Betsy, Randy and Lillian, who happened to be in the Albany area. Even more wonderfully, events arranged themselves so that Tom and Betsy would pick me up at the end of the retreat to drive together to the Catholic Worker gathering.

Pete and Ellen also represented the St. Louis Catholic Worker at the gathering, which was held at Immaculate Conception Seminary in Darlington, New Jersey. The seminary is soon to be developed as condominiums: a sign of the times? But while the two hundred odd Workers and fellow travellers inhabited the place, it was difficult to imagine a classy condominium ever occurring in the same spot. . . the chapel is to be "converted" into a rec room, rumor has it.

It was good to see again Deane Mowrer, Sharon Wilson and Annette Bles (not "Bless", as she was constantly having to remind the jail officials) from our time together in May in "D.C.D.C." (District of Columbia Dept. of Corrections).

My basic impression from the gathering is of the vitality of the Catholic Worker movement as it notes its 50th birthday. There are around 90 houses of hospitality afoot in the country, probably a larger number than at any time in history, and a whole diversity of activities that indicate the presence of energy and creativity. For instance, the FAST FOR LIFE (an open ended water fast by 11 people until there is a significant step towards halting the arms race begun Aug. 6), is based at the Oakland Catholic Worker.

CENTER OF CONCERN CONFERENCE

I was able to catch a ride with John & Pauli (a newly married couple) and Terry from St. Francis CW in Washington, D.C., where I attended 2 courses of the Center of Concern. One was on Implementing the Bishops' Pastoral on War & Peace; another on America's Spiritual and Social Crisis. The last was a provocative and well-thought out analysis of our times and the Church's response: the 3 stages of industrial capitalism, the significance of the women's movement, the crisis of modernity, etc. A newly expanded edition of Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice, is available from the Center; and I highly recommend it. It's the kind of book Peter Maurin would avidly devour, I'm sure.

Because of all the previous "chance" path-crossings of the summer, I almost took with aplomb the news that Randy was in the Washington Freeze office so we could get together for a meal.

NEW YORK CATHOLIC WORKER

I caught a ride to New York with 3 Little Sisters of the Assumption, whose founding purpose was to help the children of the poor when the mother was ill or incapacitated. They were greeted with familiarity and affection by Julianna at Maryhouse when they deposited me at the front door. Almost the next day, a whole van load of us set off to Peter Maurin Farm, to celebrate Deane Mowrer's 77th birthday. I stayed at the Farm nearly a week, haying, weeding, watering, picking raspberries and reading with Deane Sigrid Unsted's superb biography of Catherine of Siena. (Unsted's Kristin Lavansdatter, originally published in the 20's, is now receiving acclaim and recently out in paperback edition.) Deane & I firmed our intent to go together to the Seneca Women's Peace Encampment. Being at the farm

Retreats ... are an unambiguous good.

makes me hope we'll sometime have a Catholic Worker farm in Missouri--soon, if I may be so bold to say.

After a few days back at Maryhouse, which reminded me very much of Karen House and gave me a comfortable "at-home" feeling, I took the Staten Island Ferry out to spend a couple of days at Dorothy's

beach bungalow. I had envisioned myself writing a great or profound treatise while there on the significance of the CW to modern western culture or something. But I occupied myself instead more simply and happily reading a Dorothy Sayers mystery and talking with Kathleen and Patrick Jordan and Doris Nielson, a woman whose story of entering the Church is remarkably similar in detail to Dorothy's own. Too. I spent some lovely hours with "Petey" Peterson, St. who had a hand in getting the current St. Louis CW on its feet back in 1976. She studies matters Jungian at the New School for Social Research when she's not visiting Pat and Kathleen.

WOMEN'S PEACE ENCAMPMENT

At the Women's Peace Encampment at Seneca, New York, we from the Catholic Worker (Deane, Sue Saghers, Kathleen Rumpf and I) found ourselves spontaneously made peacekeepers as hostile townspeople of Waterloo blockaded an educational march about 100 women were having from Seneca Falls to the Encampment, stopping along the way at sites of historical import for women's rights. The townspeople viewed us as unpatriotic and did not want to allow the march to go thru the town. It was the most tense and hostile group environment I have ever experienced. As one man who charged the women with a loaded rifle was wrestled to the ground, I thought immediately of the Civil Rights Movement and of how the possibility of violence is never far away. Deane, Sue, I and others formed a line between the hostile townspeople and the women who seated themselves on the road. I credit Deane's age and presence with making a significant contribution to peace that day. Because the Sheriff's position is an elective one, the results of the incident were that all 53 women who chose to remain seated were arrested, but no townspeople except the rifle bearer and one woman who spontaneously joined the arrestees out of outrage at the injustice. Even we peacekeepers only narrowly missed arrest.

I spent the next (Sun. July 31) afternoon telephoning local religious people asking them to be present at the large march to the Seneca Army Depot, (where nuclear weapons are said to be stored) scheduled for the next day. Everyone I spoke with was receptive and kind. I assume people on the more official government end of things must have had the same concern as me, because a state of emergency was declared that night and the New York State Troopers called out.

The large march of over 2,000 women was impressive and nonviolent, though marred by the absence of the 53 jailed women. Several heavy rainfalls failed to dampen spirits, but did cool things off. The 4 of us from Catholic Worker made our way all the way to the gate, blockaded it and prayed the Office for the Dead in the midst of the screams and taunts of the local people on the one side, and hearty cheers of marchers on the other, as each of 244 women climbed the fence.

COMING HOME

In the midst of the march--should I have been surprised?--I bumped into Kathy Spaar from St. Louis. She and her husband of three weeks, Bill Potapchuk, kindly allowed me to ride back to St. Louis with them. They had just come from visiting Randy, Betsy and Lillian. They said they were thinking of moving to the north east. I said that probably meant we would be good friends because all my dear married friends seem to move out of St. Louis, which is alright as long as I can continue to bump into them on an almost regular basis, as happened this summer.

The night before I left St. Louis, folks such as Bill Miller, Pete Rick and Virginia Druhe presented me with an official Ledger Book to keep an account of myself, so to speak. I, however, see it less a matter of accounting than gratitude: thank you. As Thomas Merton says in his Letter to a Young Activist, "In the end, it is the reality of personal relationships that saves everything. . ."

The Dark Side of "Brightside"

By Lee Carter



Joyce Kilmer wrote a poem that he called Trees. He told us of the beauty of the trees, how the birds would nest in their branches.

Well, there is something called "Brightside"--a project of the City of St. Louis-- which is destroying all the beauty that Joyce Kilmer wrote about. As a northside resident for the last twenty years, it pains my heart to see how dismal the land looks, where once stood five or six large beautiful trees.

It is now a barren strip--and a dust bowl, because a few years ago the City came through to defoliate all the empty lots. Then the big machines came one morning and uprooted or knocked down all the trees. We asked the drivers why. They said they had to take out all the trees in order to plant grass.

They are taking what little beauty we have left in our neighborhood. They knocked down and uprooted a large walnut tree--by mistake, they said--whose branches were loaded with nuts. The walnut tree was also the home of a little squirrel.

I think I will always be a little sick at heart when I look out the kitchen window at Karen House and remember the trees that once stood there.

Lee Carter, former restaurant owner and present clothing room "czar", has been a member of the Karen House community for the last year.

From Cass House

By Kathy Barton

So much has gone on these last few months that it is difficult to know where to begin. We closed the house for the month of August. It probably is a good thing because our ceiling was literally falling down upon us. One of the two house cars was totaled. Fortunately, no one was hurt, but having only one car limits food pickups. We spent three days on retreat together during the break, reflecting on the year and growing closer as a community. It was nice to simply enjoy each others' company without the sound of bells or buzzers.

Since last October, a little over 200 women have stayed with us and--just guessing--I would say at least 200 children. We have no estimate on the men because of missing log books, but all 15 beds were full every night, and there has always been a waiting list. We have served approximately 36,000 meals in that time.

Mary Elizabeth Herdliska has lived and worked with us for several years now while earning money for graduate school. She is finally ready and will leave for Louvain in September to study theology. It's hard to believe she's going, but we are excited for her and hope for the very best.

Mark McCarthy, who came to our community in January, left in May to take care of an ill grandparent. We miss him. Jay Lambie has spent the summer with us and has been a delight to have around. Sr. Teresa Allerton, a novice with the Sisters of St. Joseph, spent six weeks here this summer and was a real joy. The woman could sure scrub woodwork. We hated to see her go, but I think she will be back.

Kathy Barton has lived at Cass House for a year and a half. She is also a student and legal secretary. Periodically, her dog, Brummy, stays with us as well.

OCTOBER 23 MARCH AND RALLY TO STOP THE CRUISE AND PERSHING-FREEZE THE ARMS RACE. March to the Arch begins at 1 pm at Lyons Park (South Broadway at Arsenal.) Rally begins at 3 pm at the Arch. This event is part of worldwide demonstrations resisting the Cruise and Pershing missiles, on the weekend of Oct. 23.

"ANNUAL" APPEAL

Dear friends,

Without your generosity, we will be out of funds before the next issue of the *Round Table* appears.

St. Louis Catholic Worker News

THE ROUND TABLE

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As most of you who visit our house know, Bobbie Ross and her children will probably have moved by the time you read this. Zack organized fixing up Bobbie's new place--painting, plastering, tearing, tearing down and rebuilding walls, etc. Very special thanks to all who helped in this effort. We hate to see Bobbie and clan go. Bobbie has the ability to keep her sense of humor almost all the time and keeps us on our toes by giving us a hard time, but what I am really going to miss is the way she cooks eggs. We will miss the children. Catherine is turning into a fine young lady. Oliver, my companion, will go anywhere and do anything. I bet Mary Elizabeth will grow up to be either a salesperson or a concert artist. Trisha, who has learned to say, "What is this?" now says it a thousand times a day. And, of course, last but not least, is Stephanie, whose smile and laughter have kept us going.

Janet McKennis has returned from her 3 week stay at Gumbo full of many stories of the joys and sorrows of life in a minimum security facility. She and Mike McIntyre chose incarceration to be free of the restrictions of probation and because they didn't believe they needed rehabilitation (and so did not want the criminal justice system to waste its money in a useless cause). It is good to have Janet back with us.

Sr. Monica Schieber, of the Precious Blood Community (O'Fallon) will be joining Sr. Carol Donahue and the rest of us this year. She comes with experience from one of the Omaha Catholic Worker houses. We welcome her with open arms.

Willie Robinson, who has been a live-in volunteer since last year, moved out the first of August. We wish him well and thank him for all that he has shared.

I will close by saying a very, very special thanks to all who have kept us going. Much love to you.

