

REQUIESCANT IN PACE



Jean Donovan, Sr. Ita Ford, Sr. Dorothy Kazel and Sr. Maura Clarke were raped and murdered in El Salvador thirty-five years ago this day, December 2, AD1980. Let those who remember, pray today for the repose of their souls.

May we also today be attentive to the Eternal Holy Spirit of Christ within us, and try to sincerely pray for those responsible for their rape and murder? Daniel Canales Ramirez, Carlos Joaquin Contreras Palacios, Francisco Orlando Contreras Recinos and Jose Roberto Moreno Canjura are the four El Salvadoran National Guardsmen convicted legally of the crimes in 1984. In 1993, a United Nations Truth Commission report concluded that Col. Carlos Eugenio Vides Casanova, the director of the National Guard in 1980, and Gen. Jose Guillermo Garcia, the Minister of Defense at the time, had organized an official cover-up. (Both men have been granted residence in the United States and now live in Florida.) Sergeant Colindres Aleman was also convicted of the murders. He was the head of that contingent of four National Guardsmen. After the women were taken captive and brought to a remote area, he went back to a telephone to get instruction on what to do with them. When he returned the order, "*una orden*

superior" he gave to the four—according to their own testimony was, “*Liquidate them!*”

In testimony to Congress in 1981 General Alexander M. Haig Jr., then Secretary of State, argued that the churchwomen might have been shot while trying to run a military roadblock. Even an official State Department post mortem on El Salvador policy that was published in July 1993 reiterated the prevailing wisdom that it was "more likely that the chaotic and permissive atmosphere at the time, not high-level military involvement, was behind the crime." In 1983, Judge Harold B. Tyler Jr., after conducting an investigation for the State Department, concluded that "Colindres Aleman acted at his own initiative" and that "the evidence of lack of higher involvement is persuasive." But that finding was based largely on a piece of secret "special evidence" that was made available to him by the United States Embassy in El Salvador and that remains classified to this day.

But, the operation was led by a sergeant, Colindres Aleman, acting out of “a persuasive combination of political, financial and sexual interests,” a political officer at the American embassy, Carl Gettinger, wrote in a top secret cable to Washington a few months after the killings. His conclusions were based on a conversation between the sergeant, Colindres Aleman, and a Salvadoran lieutenant who had recorded it secretly for the embassy. “Extraordinary secrecy surrounded the tape,” Gettinger reported; it was kept in a safe in the embassy, “from where it was roused infrequently.”

Robert White, who was the American Ambassador to El Salvador at the time of the killings, said, "when the act was done, I knew immediately it was the military." Secretary of State Alexander Haig, asked White to send a cable stating that the military was making progress in the investigation of the murders. White, a career diplomat who had served under every president since Eisenhower balked, and sent his own cable: “I will have no part of any cover-up.” "It is totally outrageous for the U.S. Government to have singled out four guys who were following orders and to insist they get punished, at the same time it is practically conniving to get the people who were the intellectual authors of this terrible incident off scot free," White said. Later White added. "That they have been let off not only with their reputations intact, but with the right of residence in the United States." Soon thereafter, he was forced out of the foreign service.

The Reagan administration blamed the victims. “These nuns were not just nuns,” said Jeanne Kirkpatrick, one of Reagan’s top foreign policy advisors and his first ambassador to the United Nations, “They were political activists.”

There is more, much more that could be added, e.g., the women were murdered Mafia style, a shot in the back of the head. But no more details are really needed to spiritually and morally assess this Satanic event. It was the fingers of the four National Guardsmen that pull the triggers of the guns that murdered Jean Donovan, Sr. Ita Ford, Sr. Dorothy Kazel and Sr. Maura Clarke. But what moved those four men to squeeze those triggers is a chain of men and women, who only God can totally name, but who we know stretch back at least to the Dulles brothers, through the School of Americas to the very nano-second before Satanized human energy was intentionally transferred to the firing mechanisms of those guns.

So indeed, let us pray on the 35th Remembrance of this heinous act for Jean, Ita, Dorothy and Maura and pray for them and, perhaps, to them for their intercession on our behalf. But, we are Christians, and as difficult as it may be humanly, let us ask the Resurrected Jesus for the grace to pray as He prayed on the Cross for His murderers, who He was well aware were *not just a few Roman soldiers* whose spirits had been partially Satanized. Love of enemies, even lethal enemies, as Jesus loved His enemies, including lethal enemies, is a *sine qua non* for any Christian, Christian Church or Christian Peace Group. The humanizing of human beings, as well as, their eternal Redemption and Salvation is found only within it. Outside of love of enemies as Jesus loved His enemies, there is nothing but the continued weeping and gnashing of teeth. The Cross of Salvation is not about enduring animal pain to placate a God who needs that to reconcile with humanity. The Cross, which Christians are to pick up daily, is about loving human beings, even sinful ones, the Way that God loves those who are at enmity with Him.

The murders of Ita, Jean, Dorothy and Maura are morally not a spiritual scintilla different from the murders of Saint Edith Stein and Blessed Franz Jagerstatter. They are all the direct and immediate fruits of the murderous and deceitful spirit of Satan that has embedded itself in the brains and twisted itself in knots around the hearts of human beings. Only a full commitment to the Cross of Christlike love of enemies, which is *the power and the wisdom of God*, can untie those knots and heal that brain rot—which extends without interruption from Cain to Golgotha to Auschwitz to El

Salvador to Fallujah to Paris to today's homicides by sea, air and land. *Ave crux, spes unica!*

And so we pray,
Requiescant in pace, Maura, Ita, Jean and Dorothy;
Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

-Emmanuel Charles McCarthy