

by Dennis Coday

View Author Profile

dcoday@ncronline.org
Follow on Twitter at @dcoday

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

November 29, 2017
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

Just got this announcement from Maryknoll Lay Missioners about an event schedule for Dec. 2:

Who: Maryknoll Lay Missioners (MKLM)

What: Maryknoll Lay Missioners will host a tribute to Jean Donovan with a celebration and ritual of receiving her guitar.

Where: Regina Coeli building, 10 Pines Bridge Road, Maryknoll, NY 10545 (Maryknoll Sisters campus)

When: Saturday, December 2, 2017, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. (Note: This is the feast day of the martyrdom of the four churchwomen in 1980.)

Why: Jean Donovan was born on April 10, 1953. She joined the Cleveland Diocese Mission Team to El Salvador. The diocese sent her to Maryknoll Lay Missioners for her formation and, from there, she was sent to El Salvador.

On December 2, 1980, Jean Donovan and Sisters Dorothy, Ita and Maura were taken by soldiers, abused, killed and buried in shallow graves in a rural area about 15 miles away from the San Salvador airport. Two days later, their bodies were discovered. Donovan’s face was completely destroyed. She was 27 years old.

For many years, Jean’s best friend kept her guitar, but a few years ago, it was sent to Father John Dear, an American Catholic priest, Christian pacifist, author, lecturer, and a former member of the Society of Jesus. John was a good friend of Jean’s and had offered strong support to Jean’s family after her death. Recently, Fr. John gave the guitar to MKLM, during a presentation to our missioner candidates as a part of their formation.

It is a great honor for MKLM to receive this symbol of a young lay woman who made an option for the poor to go to mission. Despite the fact that Jean had so many material opportunities in her life in the US, she chose to serve in a distressed, war-torn country and ultimately lost her life while caring for the poor. We honor Jean and pray for her courage and strength.

Advertisement