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## **Dec. 2, Dorothy Kazel, Ita Ford, Jean Donovan, and Maura Clarke**

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NCR Today

On Dec. 2, 1980, Sr. Dorothy Kazel, OSU., Jean Donovan, Sr. Maura Clarke, MM, and Sr. Ita Ford, MM were beaten, raped, and murdered by five members of the National Guard of El Salvador.

For anyone unfamiliar with their story and with the Reagan administration's reaction, here is a brief introduction.

Many books and articles have been written about Ita, Maura, Jean and Dorothy in the 29 years since their martyrdom, but no one has covered the story with the intensity and thoroughness of the National Catholic Reporter's editors and writers. I have kept a clipping of a letter to the editor since it was published in December 1980. (Was this the first miracle by Dorothy, Ita, Jean, and Maura?)

"NCR sends especially warm Christmas wishes and prayers to James Sipes, a Michigan federal prison inmate who sent us this letter:

". . . I am 20 years old and in prison. But I need to somehow explain the pain I felt when I read the news of the death of our sisters (in El Salvador).

"Not much in life anymore upsets or shocks me. I did, though, cry and I was moved to learn of what happened. Sitting here in isolation where I read the NCR, I felt a change, I felt the lives of the four (women). I mean, I never knew them but I felt them, I could see them smile and laugh, I felt their kindness and caring for people. This is why I cried, 'Why was it done?' It seemed such a cruel and senseless act.

"All at once I felt hate, sadness, and I really felt pain. I just don't understand! I don't care much about anything, until this day, when I realized how selfish I've been with my own life. I am not a dramatic-speaking person, but if I could give myself to bring them back, I would. By their deaths I felt life; I really felt a need to keep trying and not to give up. . . .

"I will pray for all of you, and at each mass say a prayer for our sisters. . . .

"JAMES SIPES  
Wayne, Mich."

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