

Delegations visit El Salvador; Commemorations planned

Cheryl Wittenauer | Nov. 30, 2010

At least three groups have organized delegations of pilgrims to El Salvador to mark the 30th anniversary of the martyrdom of U.S. churchwomen Ita Ford, Maura Clarke, Dorothy Kazel and Jean Donovan on Dec. 2, 1980, and to honor their lives and legacy.

The SHARE Foundation, along with cosponsors, Pax Christi USA and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, will host visits to the historical martyr sites including where the women, Archbishop Romero and the Jesuits were killed.

Participants in the Nov. 29-Dec. 6 delegation also may attend other commemoration events, meet Christian base communities, Salvadoran women lawmakers, and learn of El Salvador's current challenges. (See <http://www.share-elsalvador.org/> for details.)

The Center for Exchange and Solidarity will host delegations Nov. 28-Dec. 6 for a program that includes an anniversary Mass and reflection at the site where the women's bodies were found, visits to the gravesite of three Maryknoll sisters in Chalatenango, and overnight visits to massacre sites, a war museum, and women's businesses. (See <http://www.cis-elsalvador.org/> for details.)

The Maryknoll Sisters in El Salvador are hosting a pilgrimage Dec. 2-4 that will include visits to Santiago Nonualco where the women's bodies were found; La Libertad, where Ursuline Sister Kazel and laywoman Donovan worked; and Chalatenango. The congregation also plans private commemorations Nov. 28 at the motherhouse in Ossining, N.Y., including a Mass and dramatic presentation, and on Jan. 6, 2011 in Washington, D.C., for an address by Sister Patricia Siemen, executive director of the Center for Earth Jurisprudence, and posthumous award to attorney Bill Ford, Ita Ford's late brother, for his work and leadership in attempting to uncover the truth about the women's deaths. The theme for this year's events is "Crossing Borders," in remembrance of the borders the women crossed in their mission work, and today's frontiers.

The Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland will present the Sister Dorothy Kazel Alleluia Award to Sister Judith Ann Dohner at 7 p.m. Dec. 4 at the congregation's motherhouse in Pepper Pike, Ohio. The event also will include musical reflections of justice and joy by local high school choirs. For information, contact Sister Mary Ellen Brinovec at 440-449-1200, Ext. 114, or email her at mebrinovec@ursulinesisters.org.

"Resilient Souls," an original choral production by Elizabeth Swados, will be performed Dec. 1, 3, and 5 in various New York City locations, and benefit the Maura Clarke-Ita Ford Center in Brooklyn. The production tells how the life, witness and death of the four churchwomen affected others and led them to reconsider their own relationships to the poor. (See <http://www.mauraclarke-itafordcenter.org/> for details.)

Swados' earlier work, "Missionaries" in Concert, a choral drama based on the women's letters, journals, lives and work, will be performed Dec. 2-4 in Boston. (See <http://www.missionariesboston.org/> for details.)

Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, will sponsor the first Biennial International Social Justice

Symposium in honor of Jean Donovan, Friday evening, Feb. 25 through Saturday, Feb. 26, 2011. The event will consider the life and times of laywoman Jean Donovan, as well as what might have her attention if she was alive today. Donovan, a Case Western Reserve alumna, was gunned down with three other U.S. churchwomen on Dec. 2, 1980, in El Salvador. For information, call 216-368-2515 or email socialjustice@case.edu.

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